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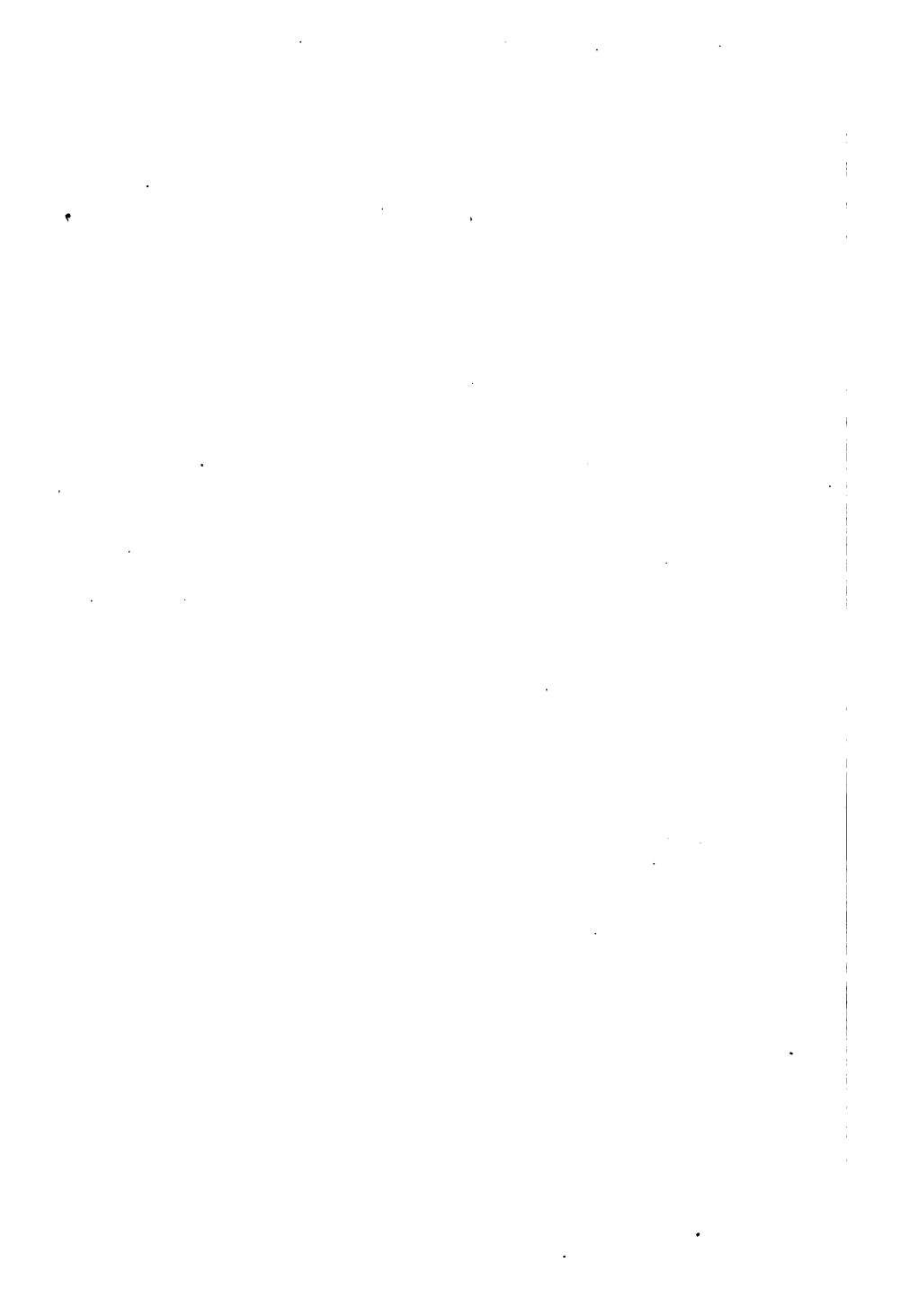
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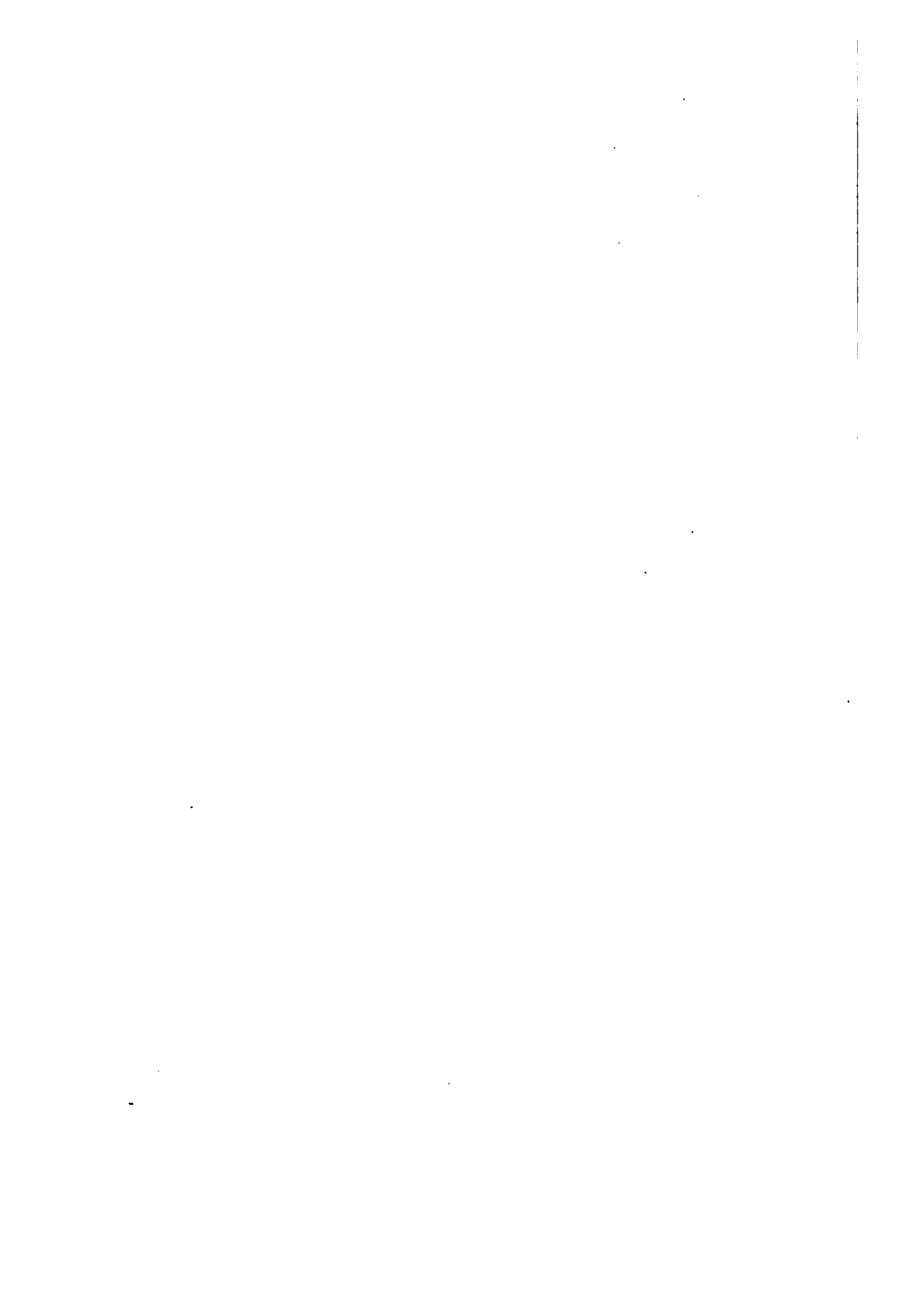
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**PEACE OR WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA**



# PEACE OR WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

A. M. S. METHUEN

"SO TO BE PATRIOTS AS NOT TO FORGET WE ARE GENTLEMEN"

EDMUND BURKE

WITH TWO MAPS

SIXTH EDITION REVISED AND ENLARGED

*[Fifteenth Thousand]*

METHUEN & CO.  
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.,  
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1901

"WITH HOW LITTLE WISDOM IS THE WORLD GOVERNED"

OXENSTIERN



## PREFACE

THE prospect of a prolongation of the South African War is beginning to shake the confidence of the public in the ability of their Ministers. When we see that after many efforts a powerful Ministry is unable to fulfil any of its predictions and that all its calculations have been falsified, we must in ordinary prudence conclude that it has totally misjudged the difficulties of its task, that its policy is not based on common sense, and that its wisdom is not equal to its good intentions. Many men who, like myself, have hitherto given an independent but steady support to the Ministerial party begin to ask themselves whether this party is pursuing a policy which is consistent with the safety and the high traditions of England.

The object of this book is, firstly, to provide a

narrative in brief of the events which preceded and caused the war, and, secondly, to offer some suggestions for the establishment of an honourable peace. It has seemed to me necessary to describe the errors of our Ministry both in their diplomacy and in their conduct of the war, both because similar problems await us in the future, and because it is clear that, if a body of men have made mistakes so enormous in the past, there is no reason why they should not make mistakes equally disastrous in the future.

It must be difficult, even for the trained politician, to decide whether a given policy is wise or well-founded; and because this is so, it is generally impossible to harmonise conflicting views. But definite statements and forecasts are palpable and intelligible things, and they can be tried by the test of accuracy or fulfilment; and men who follow the dictates of common sense will soon be able to discover whether their political guides have shown moderate foresight and wisdom in the past, and whether on the basis of their preceding exploits they are worthy to be trusted with the developments of the future. If we apply such a test, it will be difficult for any reasonable man to assert that our Government have dis-

played the qualities which we look for in our rulers.

Our first duty, then, is to acquaint ourselves with the facts of the situation. We can then either square them with our preconceived views and wishes, or, what is better, we can face them honestly. But, either from carelessness or passion, to deny facts and to ignore facts—surely this is the height of wilful unwisdom.

The short sketch of South African history to 1899 and the chapter on the Campaign attempt to prove that the attitude of our Ministers was based on faulty information and on a complete misapprehension of the problem before them ; while the chapter on the Boers will provide the public with material on which to base an appreciation of our foes somewhat more generous than the one which at present seems fashionable. I have also tried to show that the present policy of the Government is likely to involve us in permanent political danger in South Africa and in an enormous addition to our financial burdens. The suggestion which I have put forward towards a reconciliation and a settlement of the two provinces is necessarily a compromise, but it is none the worse on that account. There are other

plans, doubtless better. But such plans, to be successful, must be based on conciliation and consent.

I am conscious that in Chapter IV. I have laid myself open to the charge of impertinent intrusion into a sphere of criticism for which I am unfitted. A layman is not competent to criticise the technical details of a science or an art. But he is, if he possess a moderate amount of common sense, able to decide whether the results of a policy are proportionate to the labour or to the expenditure or to the dangers involved. It may be that my views are held by more people than dare to express them; and if I am wrong in my estimate of our military position, I cannot, at all events, make mistakes more gross than have been committed during the last eighteen months by all but one or two of the most eminent military critics of the day. In any case, the public has been so deluged with optimism that a corrective may be wholesome.

There is one matter which I would willingly have left untouched. The devastation of Boer property, the reduced rations of the women and children—such methods of warfare are unutterably odious to all chivalrous Englishmen; nor can the

most ardent supporter of the war regard them without shame. It has been necessary to speak of them because they are a direct result of the political errors which have prolonged the war beyond all reasonable necessity. But I hope I have not dwelt on them overmuch. They are things which later on we had better hide in decent oblivion.

It is difficult in the treatment of such a problem as this to write or to speak in terms so moderate as to win the approval of one's opponents, but I trust they will believe that I have endeavoured to do justice to views which are honestly though, as I think, erroneously held. I cannot hope that those who still advocate hostilities *à outrance* will accept the arguments or the proposals contained in this book, but I beg them if they may be tempted to call me a Pro-Boer<sup>1</sup> and my policy a policy of cowardice, to remember that Lord Kitchener is

<sup>1</sup> This term seems to bear a double meaning: on the one hand it may describe a man who admires the splendid patriotism of the Boers and who believes that the war was unnecessary. In this respect I am a Pro-Boer in common with millions of my fellow-countrymen. The term is also used abusively to denote a man who wishes to see his country beaten and humiliated, and who is infected by the virus of antipatriotism. There are not many thousands of such men, and I am not one of them.

opposed to "a fight to a finish," that he is in favour of offering reasonable terms to the Boers and an amnesty to the Cape rebels, and that of his own initiative he has offered such terms. It is clear, therefore, that if the advocates of conciliation are guilty of cowardice, they possess this unfortunate defect in common with the Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. Those who obstinately oppose the wishes of the one man who is acquainted with the position in South Africa must bear a terrible responsibility.

I hope that many readers who may not agree with my treatment of the origin and conduct of this war may be ready to consider with attention the dangers of continued warfare and the arguments which I have advanced for a policy of peace. However divergent our views on the past may be, we are all bound to frame our policy in the interests of our own country. I have written neither as a Conservative nor as a Liberal, nor as a sentimentalist, but as an Englishman who believes that the time has come when all reasonable and moderate men should attempt to save their country from the costly humiliations that await her if our Ministers pursue their present path. Of one thing I am sure: if the Government is allowed to follow

its policy of mingled drift and violence, the result will be disaster.

In a book which covers a period of time so long and so full of important episodes, it is probably impossible to avoid errors of fact or inference. I can only say that I have endeavoured to be accurate in my facts and fair in my conclusions.

A. M. S. M.

*May 28, 1901.*

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IN the second, third, fourth, and fifth editions of this book I have made many additions and a few corrections.

*June 14, 1901.*

*July 12, 1901.*

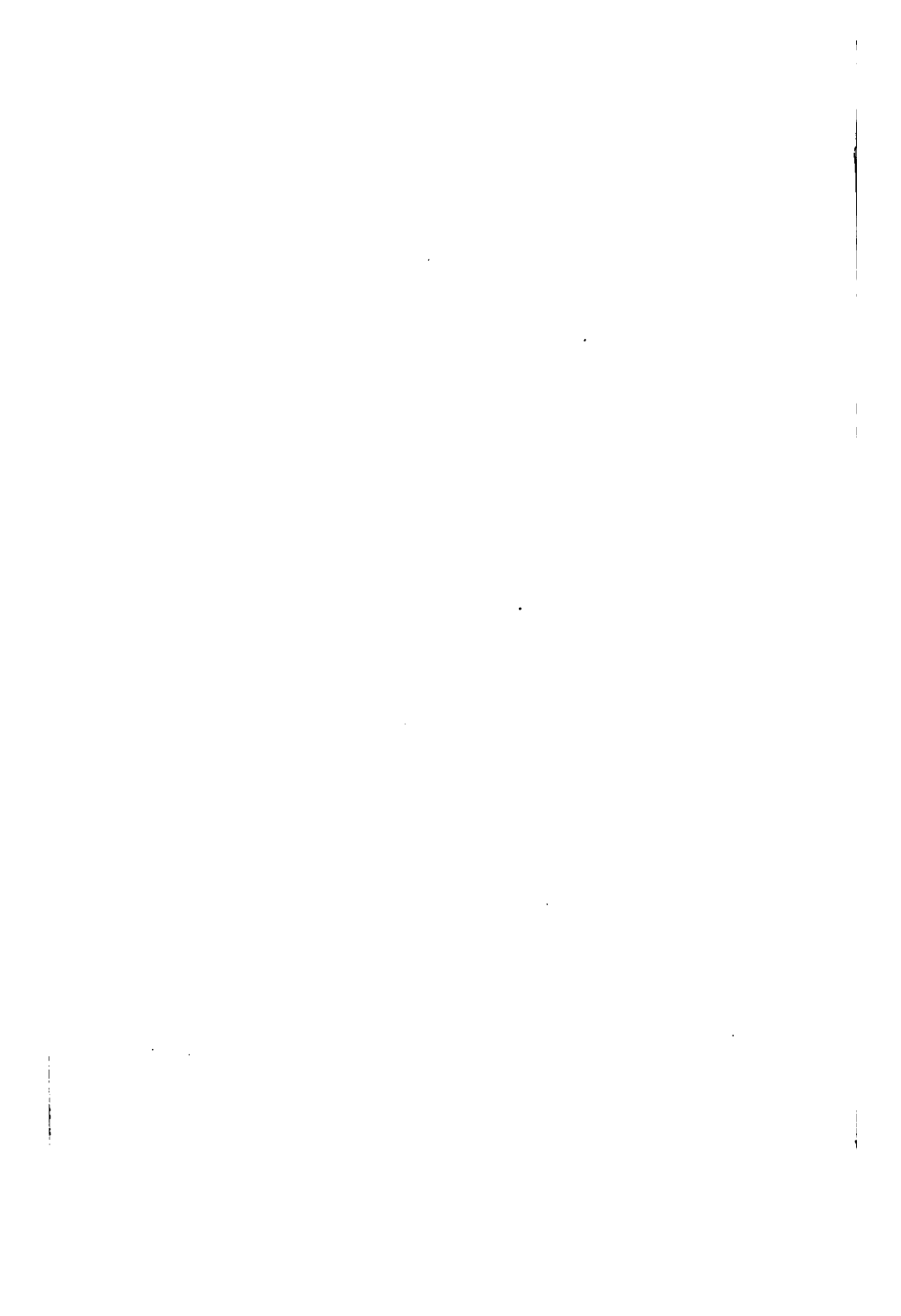
*June 29, 1901.*

*August 5, 1901.*

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THE sixth edition of this book has been again enlarged by the addition of many references. For these I am indebted to the kindness of a friend. I owe thanks also to the numerous correspondents who have written to me on various points in the controversy.

*Aug. 30, 1901.*





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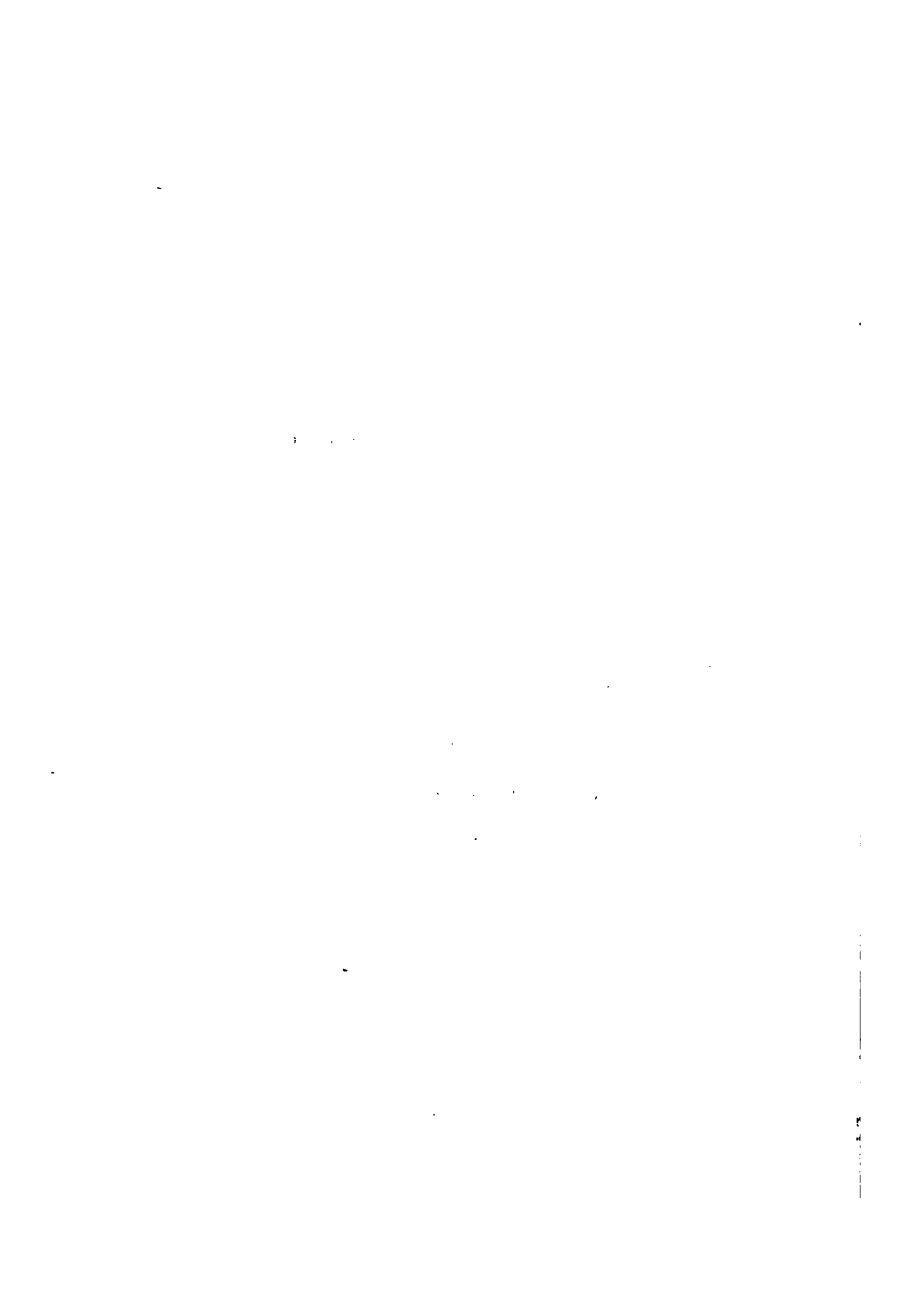
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"IN South Africa two races—the English and the Dutch—have to live together. At the present time the Dutch are in a majority, and it is therefore the duty of every statesman, of every well-wisher of South Africa, to do all in his power to maintain amicable relations between the two races. In our own Cape Colony the Dutch are in a majority. There are tens of thousands of Dutchmen in the Cape Colony who are just as loyal to the throne and to the British connection as, let me say, our French-Canadian fellow-subjects in the Dominion of Canada. But, at the same time, these Dutch fellow-subjects of ours very naturally feel that they are of the same blood as the Dutchmen in the two Republics, and they sympathise with their compatriots whenever they think that they are subject, or are likely to be subject, to any injustice, or to the arbitrary exercise of force."

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, *April*, 1896.

# PEACE OR WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

## INTRODUCTION

### 1775 AND 1899 : A PARALLEL

**H**ISTORICAL parallels are often fanciful, and it is unwise to press them severely. But history is the best teacher of the present, as it is the best prophet of the future ; and, though there are many and important points of difference, the most casual student of history cannot fail to notice the painful resemblance between the situation, both military and political, of 1775-83 and the situation of to-day.

The cause of the war of 1775 may be stated in a few words. The King and his Ministers claimed the right of sovereignty over the American Colonies. From this they deduced the right of taxing those colonies for Imperial purposes. The Americans, admitting the abstract right of sovereignty, denied the right of taxation by an English Parliament in which they were not represented. The English Ministers were determined to maintain, defend, and

test this right : the Colonists were equally determined to resist its practical exercise. The English, believing that the Americans would yield to pressure, proceeded to coercive measures ; and in six years England was defeated, and her American Colonies were lost. It may not be uninteresting or unfruitful to examine in some detail the political and social conditions which preceded and caused the crisis.

The middle years of the eighteenth century were years of gross and material prosperity. The moral and intellectual aims of the day were low ; the ideal was languishing ; wealth and the influence of wealth were growing ; and most of the population were plunged in torpor and indifference to any but material concerns. With prosperity came a jealous insolence in the public spirit, a brutality of ambition which could brook no rival, and a hopeless vulgarity in political thought. All classes were pervaded by it, from the King to the cobbler. The wealth which had followed the great conquests of Chatham in Asia and America during the last years of George II. brought with it extravagant habits of life ; and with them came the necessity for making money fast, and the temptation to make it corruptly. The standard of financial morality was steadily sinking lower, and society was vulgarised by ambitious *parvenus* from the East and West Indies. The old and respectable ideals of commerce were rejected in favour of swifter and more questionable ones. Men and women in the highest ranks of society thought it no shame to consort with vulgar millionaires who had fattened on war contracts, with stock-jobbers who had made vast

fortunes by dishonest means, with speculators and slave-drivers and usurers. Serious observers, who saw the frantic and successful efforts which the over-gorged and bloated "peculators of the public gold" made to enter high society, felt something of the indignation which inspired Juvenal's burning satire.

The increasing luxury and the rise in the price of the necessities of life drove our public men to seek sources of revenue which their forefathers would have scorned. The sale of public offices, of seats in Parliament, and of influence, had created a system of jobbery so gigantic that it is to-day almost impossible to appreciate its far-reaching effects. The Paymaster of the Forces thought it no disgrace to use hundreds of thousands of pounds of the public money for private ends; Ministers did not shrink from open bribery, from receiving fees and percentages, and from sharing the profit on contracts of every kind.

The picture is not an exaggerated one. The memoirs, letters, and novels of the day paint it in even stronger colours, and there is no reason to doubt that in 1770 public morality and public spirit were at their lowest ebb.

On the other side of the Atlantic a new race, sprung from the same stock, was making for itself a very different social scheme. The American Colonists, in whose blood the stern love of civil and religious liberty which inspired Cromwell's troopers had lost none of its strength, had passed through long and bitter struggles. They had emerged from the first phases of colonisation. The New England States were beginning to show signs of prosperity and of an ordered civilisation. Agriculture was flourishing, public schools and libraries

were being established in every town, and in 1775 the population of the Colonies was not less than two millions.

The character of the American Colonists has been drawn for us in its main, and, it may be added, in its most pleasing, features by Burke. The dominant note of the American character was a fierce love of freedom, a love so strong that it ill bore any restraint, and would brook no coercion. The Colonists were, in many cases, descendants of men who had left their homes in England because they would not suffer the persecution of the Church and Monarchy. That stubborn spirit, which gave them the courage to brave tempestuous seas and the perilous unknown, they bequeathed to their heirs, together with a religious creed which, hard and narrow, was yet a source of strength, an inspiration and a vital force. They had, through their provincial assemblies, practically acquired the right of self-government and self-taxation. Living at wide distances from one another, they gained the strength and self-reliance which isolation often brings. Life on their farms and the chase of wild animals gave them vigour and a sturdy spirit, while in the Southern States the possession of large bands of slaves made them haughty and impatient of control. Travellers in America were unanimous in their eulogy of American hospitality, kindness, and simplicity. The extremes of wealth and poverty were, in most States, absent. Every one seemed comfortable, courteous, and dignified.

The defects of the Americans were the defects of their qualities. They were stubborn, litigious, and bitterly suspicious. Strenuous and active in their daily lives, they made no allowance for the tempta-



tions of a civilisation older and more complex than their own. They were adepts at driving hard bargains, and their methods were not always consistent with the highest commercial honour. They yielded with a bad grace, and could not bear defeat. In a word, they were not an easy or pleasing people in their business dealings, and they were a most dangerous people with whom to embark on a political dispute.

There could be little sympathy between such men and the English Ministers. To the officials who had been sent to America because their debts or their amours made England too hot for them, their austerity was odious and ridiculous. To them the Colonists appeared as did the Round-heads to the Cavaliers—canting, hypocritical, and cowardly. The Colonists, on their side, chafed under the unsympathetic hands of the English Governors; they were repelled and shocked by a profligacy and want of principle to which they were unaccustomed, and they were angered by the constant, if petty, invasions of rights which they held dear.

For England and the King, as the impersonation of all that was highest and best in the English character, the Colonists entertained a warm and pathetic affection. They had been oftentimes willing to shed their blood, to give their money and their time, for the Imperial interests of England. They did not understand, and they could not believe, that the policy which was so fast making them into rebels proceeded from the King's obstinate character, and they discriminated between the King and his officials.

From such a body of men, so simple and yet so

shrewd, so fierce and yet so affectionate, with all its crude qualities so attractive, the United States of America have sprung ; and what soon will be the mightiest nation on earth was lost to the English Crown by the perversity of a foolish King and the obstinacy and ignorance of an English Cabinet and English officials.

The war between England and her American Colonies was the culmination of a discontent which might be traced back at least eighty years. America had long fretted under the regulations of the English Parliament. Whether these regulations were justifiable or not, is beside the question ; they were vexatious, and they bore no fruit but irritation. The Colonists complained that their trade was crippled by the Mother Country, that customs and duties were forced upon them, that they were expected to maintain a large number of English troops, and that they were charged with the salaries of English governors and officials. The imposition of the Stamp Act of 1765 was received by the Americans with an indignation which found vent in serious riots, and though this Act was repealed in 1766, the good effect of the repeal was soon nullified by the imposition of new duties on the import from Great Britain of various articles of commerce, including tea and glass. These duties were both irritating and barren. The Colonists quickly found means of evading the imposts, either by legal methods, in which their skill was supreme, or by declining to allow the import and use of the articles on which the duties were laid. The English officials were forced to retire discomfited from the unequal contest, and their defeat begat in the minds of the King and

his Ministers the conclusion that force was the only remedy.

The earnest protests of the Colonists were received with little consideration. They were not in accord with the temper of the time, and the King regarded them as a derogation of his sovereign power. He saw in the action of the Colonists the misconduct of rebellious and froward subjects. He read into their irritation a desire to break away from the British Empire. He was told that a great conspiracy was on foot, and that the leaders of American opinion were definitely aiming at complete freedom from English control. Unwise counsellors assured him that the repeal of the Stamp Act and a policy of magnanimity had already created a dangerous insolence among the Americans, and that if he did not decide to stem the rising waters of insubordination, America would be lost to the Empire.

There were a large number of Colonists who were unwilling to oppose the King's policy, either from a sentiment of pure loyalty or because they were political opponents of the champions of American rights. These men were called Loyalists, and their counsel was for stern measures. They assured the Ministers that they had only to be firm to conquer, that the "traitors," haughty as they were in speech, were cowards at heart, and that chastisement with a high and unsparing hand was the only cure for an intolerable position.

In vain did Benjamin Franklin warn the Ministers that it was dangerous to place too great a strain on the loyalty of the Americans. He was heard before the Privy Council, and was answered

and attacked by Wedderburn with studied insolence. The Privy Councillors shook in their seats with laughter. Franklin said not a word, but stood composed and erect. He wore a full dress suit of velvet, and the next time he wore that suit was when, in 1778, he signed the treaty with France which gave to the United States the rank of an independent nation.

The decay of public morality and public spirit is generally accompanied by the decay of Parliament. The authority of the House of Commons was at a low ebb ; and the Ministry, backed by a powerful and submissive majority, did not conceal their contempt for the representatives of the people. The fortunes of England were in the hands of her King. George III. had become not only King of England, but the absolute ruler of his Ministers. They were his servants, trained to execute his decrees, and to sink their will in his. North, who had become Prime Minister after the retirement of Grafton in 1770, was a man of considerable parts and of a kindly nature. He was uneasy about the King's policy, and the most respectable members of his own Cabinet had similar misgivings. But North's character was fatally weak. In the House of Commons he was constantly asleep, and, gifted though he was with clearness of vision and common-sense, he was too proud or too indolent to assert his own will. Such men are not rare in our political history, and their tenure of office has not unfrequently been a time of national disaster. They yield their own prudence to the rash obstinacy of a stronger and less refined will. The dangers, which they foresaw, approach, the storm rises, and the rocks appear ;

they wring their hands, the rudder slips from their grasp, and the ship is wrecked.

Rigby, Wedderburn, and Thurlow, the three chief advocates of the Ministerial policy, were men of great ability, considerable force of character, and absolutely unscrupulous methods. Wedderburn's career was typical of the political standards of the day. He was an apostate from the Whigs because he saw among the Tories higher hopes of success. He soon justified his promotion by his violence. His tongue was as bitter as his character was corrupt. Master of lucid and incisive speech, he was able to dominate a weak House of Commons and to hide his ambitions under the mask of patriotism. He had no sense of political morality. To him the highest form of Parliamentary success was to browbeat those whose arguments he could not refute, and to denounce as traitors men whose characters were, as compared with his own, as white as snow. He had not even the excuse of ignorance. Before his apostasy he had been a determined opponent of that detestable policy of which he was now the champion, and the speeches which in his saner days he had delivered against this policy would have formed a complete armoury for the Opposition. His own party feared as much as they admired him: his opponents hated him: no one trusted him. In the bitter phrase of Junius, there was something about him which even treachery would not trust.

A determined and united Opposition would have prevented the approach of the crisis. But in 1773 the Whigs were divided by jealousies and disheartened by constant defeat. It requires a

high degree of moral courage to stand up night after night in the House of Commons in opposition to a powerful Ministry, when that Ministry is unscrupulous, and when it has the enormous advantage of being able to say that any opposition is unpatriotic and a direct incentive to war.

We need not be surprised, therefore, that the Opposition was languid and impotent. Rockingham and Richmond were men of the highest honour; but they withdrew in despair from a hopeless contest. They confessed that nothing would restore common sense to the country "except the dreadful consequences which must follow from the diabolical policy of the Government." Horace Walpole, in a pungent sentence, disposes of the charge that Colonists were strengthened in their resistance by the Whigs. "The cruellest thing that has been said of the Americans by the Court is that they were encouraged by the Opposition. You might as soon light a fire with a wet dish-clout." Burke in vain attempted to rouse both the Opposition and the public from their apathy. He advocated the assertion of the great principles of liberty and justice which had brought England to her present supremacy. The people, he said, were asleep or intoxicated; they were not answerable for their supine acquiescence; God never made them to think or act without guidance. But the guides were cowed into silence.

There were, indeed, noble exceptions. Chatham, the most splendid and generous of our Ministers, was beloved by the Americans as the incarnation of all that was great in the English character; and though by the irony of fate the Ministry of which

he was the nominal head imposed the duty which was the penultimate cause of the rebellion, he continued to advocate their claims to our sympathy, to attack with fierce eloquence and scathing irony the Ministers who were drifting nearer to ruin, and to denounce the use of German mercenaries and Indian savages against an Anglo-Saxon people. He defended the action of the Americans. "I rejoice that America has resisted," he said; and his brave words were received with a torrent of abuse by the Ministerial party and by the petty scribblers of the day. But Chatham was undaunted. Again he attacked the policy of the Ministers. It would be "an impious war," he said, "with a people contending in the great cause of public liberty. All attempts to impose servitude upon such men—to establish despotism over a mighty continental nation—must be vain and futile. *We shall be forced ultimately to retract; let us retract when we can, not when we must.*"

Two years after the war had begun, he used words which came naturally from the mouth of a noble and chivalrous Englishman: "If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—*never*—NEVER—NEVER."

Burke, the wisest of our political writers and the greatest of English orators, was equally outspoken. He defended the right of the Colonists to resist an attack on their liberties, and inveighed against the "impious" demand of the Ministers for "unconditional submission." In two speeches which contain the very essence of political wisdom, he laid down the rules which should govern our relations with our Colonies, rules which must

remain for all time the basis of our Imperial system. With that clear insight into the phenomena of the moment which distinguished him, he saw that the Americans were fighting the battle of civil liberty all over the world; and two years after the war had begun he dared to say that he could not wish the Colonists to be subdued by arms. He knew that such a subjugation could only be effective by maintaining a great body of standing forces, and perhaps of foreign forces. He foresaw the growth of military influence with results fatal to English interests and English liberty.

Charles James Fox spoke with a voice as clear and as vigorous. Brushing aside the cheap fallacy that any opposition to the Ministry of the day is unpatriotic,<sup>1</sup> he attacked the insane policy that was leading England into a disastrous war. He did not hesitate to express his admiration of the American leaders, and to compare their resolute and heroic struggle for liberty with the fatuous mixture of violence and weakness which was dignified by the title of the Ministerial policy.

These great men, refusing to prophesy smooth things to a blinded public, and courageous enough

<sup>1</sup> "‘The persons,’ reply the Ministry, ‘are responsible who have always opposed our measures.’ This is the strange and the ridiculous manner in which they argue and endeavour to shuffle themselves out of that responsibility which they know to be so dangerous. If they had succeeded they would have taken all the credit and all the praise to themselves, but because they have failed they throw the blame upon those men who endeavoured to prevent the calamities by stopping the causes. . . . This sort of language merits nothing but ridicule and contempt.”

CHARLES JAMES FOX (1781).



to hold their own country in the wrong, were shouted down in Parliament, and assailed with every form of virulent abuse by the supporters of the war, who had few facts to bring forward and no arguments to interpret those facts. They were called "traitors," "friends of the Americans," "enemies to the King," "enemies of England," and "emissaries of the enemy."

It is too true that these violent counsels were popular both in high social circles and among the body of the people. The English public was intensely irritated by what it considered a purely vexatious resistance on the part of the Colonists. The average mind has no means of testing the statements of interested officials; the newspapers of the day gave little guidance; and what guidance they did give was in the direction of a "strong" policy. The most potent cause of political error is ignorance. Involuntary ignorance is comparatively harmless, and can be cured; but wilful ignorance, the ignorance that results from prejudice and passion and foolish pride, has generally been the parent of grave national disaster. The ignorance which despises every other nation, which closes its eyes to every danger, which refuses to receive warning or advice, was the direct cause of the disaster of 1775. The King and the Ministry knew nothing of the temper of the American Colonists; and all their information was derived from officials. These officials were either the victims of the grossest illusions or guilty of the grossest falsehood. The language in which they described the character of the Colonists, their

\* Burke was even called "an American" (*Letter to the Sheriffs*). There was apparently no use of "pro-" then.

disloyal ambitions, their dishonesty, their hypocrisy, and the certainty of their submission at the first stroke of the whip, was both ludicrous and tragical.

An English officer wrote: "As to what you hear of their taking arms, it is mere bullying, and will go no further than words. Whenever it comes to blows, he that can run fastest will think himself best off. Any two regiments here ought to be decimated if they did not beat in the field the whole force of the Massachusetts province, for though they are numerous, they are but a mere mob without order or discipline, and very awkward in handling their arms." According to General Gage, the Bostonians were "sly traitors" and "turbulent puritans," "scoundrels," "ruffians," and "cowards," "the worst of subjects," and the most "immoral" of men. With that extraordinary facility for saying the wrong thing which always distinguishes the foolish ruler, he issued a Proclamation against Hypocrisy: a characteristic example of the tact and consideration of the English Colonial Governor of that day.

In vain did those who knew the American spirit and character warn the public and the Ministry of the dangers of their policy. General Lee wrote that there were 200,000 able-bodied men, hardy, active, ready to encounter every danger for their liberty. The Government, ignorant and self-complacent, sent 10,000 men to Boston, reinforcements numerous enough to irritate the Colonists, but absurdly inadequate to hold down a district so vast and a people so valiant. The King readily believed what he wished to believe; the Ministry followed his

wishes ; and the public received their instructions from the Ministers.

Many of the English officials were men of high character and ability. But they were utterly deficient in common sense and imagination, and they took their ideas from the Loyalists, whose violence and folly saw in a "strong policy" the only cure for political trouble. Of the English Governors and officials Franklin wrote :

"Their office makes them insolent ; their insolence makes them odious ; and, being conscious that they are hated, they become malicious. Their malice urges them to continual abuse of the inhabitants in their letters to Administration, representing them as disaffected and rebellious, and (to encourage the use of severity) as weak, divided, timid, and cowardly. Government believes all ; thinks it necessary to support and countenance its officers. Their quarrelling with the people is deemed a mark and consequence of their fidelity. They are, therefore, more highly rewarded, and this makes their conduct still more insolent and provoking."

Ignorance so enormous, misinformation so wanton, miscalculation so gross and so disastrous, has probably been displayed by a political party only at one other period of English history.

Meantime, the temper on both sides was rising fast. The Ministers were discussing preambles when they should have thought of conciliation, and logic when they should have looked to facts. In Parliament coercive measures were passed by large majorities, strong bodies of troops were

despatched to America, and the King and Ministers were determined to teach the Americans "a sharp lesson." On the other hand, the Colonists, threatened by such measures, lost neither their dignity nor their courage. They recognised that their choice must lie between submission with its infamy and ruin, and resistance to the enormous power of an Empire which had beaten every rival. Boston, with her 5,000 citizens able to bear arms, did not take long to make her choice. Quietly, but firmly, she prepared for what seemed to her the inevitable conflict. The various townships of the Colony were not slow to promise their assistance, and the other States, under stress of a common menace, resolved to take their stand with Massachusetts. The ministers of religion, with the exception of the priests of the Church of England, preached resistance from their pulpits; and the stirring phrases which the Jewish prophets had used thousands of years before were making the blood of the Colonists tingle in their veins.

The conflict could not longer be averted, and on April 18, 1775, the first blood was spilt at Lexington. The storm had at last burst, and the King, with the blind folly which had characterised his policy, expressed himself as relieved and pleased. The sword must now do what diplomacy had failed to do. The conciliatory advances of the Colonists were roughly refused, absolute surrender was demanded, and thus with light hearts did George III. and his Ministers embark on their career of shame and disaster.

It is not necessary to narrate at length the history of the American War. It is a war

interesting to the strategist and the tactician, and particularly to the political student; but for the general reader it is the narrative of a long and tedious struggle in which the balance of victory inclined now to one side and now to the other; in which the pomp and circumstance of war were wanting, and in which the final victory was to the side which could avoid exhaustion the longer. The Americans were fortunate in the possession of leaders of high character and absolute self-sacrifice; but if George Washington had not been their commander and guide, it is conceivable that the result of the war of 1775 might have been different.

Washington's difficulties were enormous. He could count on only a section of the American population; at least one half were Loyalist or neutral. His numbers continually sank from 15,000 to 5,000, his men were bootless, his stock of muskets and gunpowder often ran so low that only every third man was an effective fighter, and his financial position was almost desperate.

But the difficulties of the English, though of another order, were as great as Washington's, and finally proved fatal. The war bore a double character. It was at one time and in one district a regular war carried on between large bodies of troops, and according to the normal rules of warfare. At another time and in another district it partook of the nature of a guerilla war waged by small and mobile columns of the enemy against a foe whom they could not hope to defeat, but whom they could harass and wear down by constant attacks. It is possible that the Americans owed much of their success to these minor opera-

tions. Nothing so quickly disheartens a great army as the persistent onset of a fierce and rapid foe who, appearing suddenly from the void, delivers a swift attack, and retreating with equal rapidity, leaves his unwieldy enemy impotent and demoralised.

The English Army had never before been engaged in war against irregular white troops. They had fought against the regular armies of France and Spain, and had almost always won the day, even against great odds. They had fought, the few with the many, against black troops in India ; they had seldom been defeated ; and in the end their campaign had always been successful. But this war was bewildering in its character, in its constant changes, and particularly in its frequent reverses. Officers and troops who, against a foe who fought by the set rules of war seldom knew defeat, were irritated and maddened by the elusive tactics and by the substantial successes of the American farmers. They had been told, and they had told themselves, that the Colonists were a rabble who could not shoot : that their troops were mere bands of marauding miscreants who would fly from the royal soldiers at the first puff of smoke. The bloody experience of Bunker's Hill, and the surrender of Saratoga, had indeed cured them of this illusion, but they could not yet regard the Colonists as serious foes. They concluded that their stubbornness was inspired by their politicians, and must be met by stern measures.

The war was conducted with the greatest rigour, and menacing proclamations were scattered broadcast. But such measures were now useless. Con-

ciliation must be frank and free, and must be willing to confess and repair an error.<sup>1</sup> At last the English Ministers, alarmed at the long continuance of the war and the entry of France into the struggle, sent a Peace Commission to America. It was now too late, and terms which a year ago might have been accepted were declined by the Colonists. In revenge for this rebuff, the Commissioners flew to violence. The Colonists were described as an "infatuated multitude" who "affected" to fight against the royal troops. Those who, even at the eleventh hour, were wise enough to desert their "misguided leaders" would be pardoned by their royal Master; but for the leaders themselves the proclamations held out no hopes of mercy. If, on the other hand, the Colonists neglected "the forgiveness offered by a considerate monarch," it would be necessary for his generals to devastate America, and to render it useless both to the Colonists and their allies.

The brutal and deliberate policy of devastation, by which the Government attempted to intimidate a foe whom they could not conquer, was supported

<sup>1</sup> "Why should we submit or concede? I will tell you, my lords, why I think you should. You have been the aggressors from the beginning. . . . If, then, we are the aggressors it is your lordships' business to make the first overture. I say again this country has been the aggressor. . . . You have burnt their houses, plundered their country, made war upon the inhabitants, confiscated their property, proscribed and imprisoned their persons. I do, therefore, affirm, my lords, that instead of exacting unconditional submission we should grant them unconditional redress. We have injured them, we have endeavoured to enslave and oppress them. Upon this clear ground, my lords, they are entitled to redress." THE EARL OF CHATHAM (1777).

by the Tories on the ground of "military exigencies."<sup>1</sup> Even the clergy and bishops, degenerate servants forgetful of the precepts of their Master, approved these barbarous methods. There were indeed two noble exceptions—the Bishops of Peterborough and St. Asaph. The former attacked the cruel policy of the Government and the generals.

"It is principally owing to the mild influence of Christianity that every nation professing the belief of it, as it were by common consent, set bounds to the savage fierceness of revenge and cruelty. Shall we, then, be the first among the nations of Europe to forget so very essential a part of its excellence as the humanity and benevolence it inspires? Shall we, I say, be the first to establish desolation upon system? And, to gratify an impotent resentment, deal fruitless destruction on the wives and children of an enemy we cannot conquer, and of friends we can no longer protect?"

And again—

"If such is the Christianity we are to propagate among the natives, it is better for their teachers, and better for themselves, that they should live and die in ignorance. If

<sup>1</sup> "The whole force of the country was to be tried; the most vigorous measures were to be made; everything was to be carried by the hand of strength, and America was to be brought to the feet of Great Britain, and submit to 'unconditional submission.' This high, this boastful language proved as vain-glorious and the attempt as unprosperous as every other to bully and deceive, to cheat and frighten."

CHARLES JAMES FOX, 1779.



they are to be involved in our guilt, take not from them their plea for mercy. Let them still have it to urge at the Throne of God that they have never heard the name of Christ."

Two years before the same wise Bishop had pointed out the folly of the Ministers, who hoped to hold in subjection a race so stubborn as the Americans.

"Experience must surely have convinced us that it is not a single battle or campaign that, as among the effeminate inhabitants of Asia, is to decide the fate of the Western world. The vanquished must fly, but they will rally again; and while the love of liberty remains, there will be some sparks of courage ever ready to take fire on the slightest occasion. The cities must be burnt, the country laid waste, and many a brave man must perish, ere the miserable remnant is brought to absolute submission; and when that is done what advantage can we expect?"

Such a policy deserved to fail, and it did fail.<sup>1</sup> It is needless to say that the sight of their burning farms and ruined villages inspired the Americans

<sup>1</sup> "In the march of the British army from Elk Hill to Williamsburg (Virginia) . . . all dwelling houses were plundered. . . . The Americans of that day computed that Cornwallis, in his midsummer marchings up and down Virginia, destroyed property to the value of three million pounds sterling. He nowhere gained a foothold, and he obtained no supplies, except through the terrors of his arms. His long travels only taught him that the bulk of the people were bent on independence." (Bancroft, vol. vi. p. 416.)

with a hatred more bitter and a determination more stubborn. They wreaked their vengeance on those unfortunate Loyalists who, confiding in the ultimate success of England, had refused to join the ranks of the Colonists. The position of these men was a difficult and a painful one. On the one hand, if they aided the English army they were liable to be shot by the Americans, and on the other, if they assisted the Colonists they were liable to be hanged by the English.

At home it was necessary to sustain the fast-waning interest of the public. The most atrocious calumnies were spread abroad concerning the conduct of the war by the Colonists. They were said to be cruel to their prisoners, and to break the rules of honourable warfare. It was asserted that poisoned bullets had been found in the pouches of the rebels. The Ministry went so far as to publish in the *London Gazette* an official statement that the Americans had scalped the wounded.<sup>1</sup> The condition of the American Army was represented to be hopeless, and the most sanguine reports were laid before the English Ministry. It was stated on the authority of the English generals and Governors that the Colonial troops were discontented and ready for mutiny; that they could secure no recruits; that their army was perishing of starvation and fatigue; that they had few supplies, and that for these they were obliged to pay in depreciated paper money. The public were regularly and constantly assured that the war

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, the English officers and privates who had been taken prisoners by the Colonists, loudly praised the tenderness and care with which they had been nursed by their "savage" enemy.

was practically over ; that the Colonies were awaiting an opportunity to submit to the King's authority ; that it was only with the greatest difficulty that Washington was able to prevent his officers and his army from deserting to the royal troops, and that the desire for peace was universal.

The real position of the English Army was carefully concealed from the public. The awful wastage which a long and indecisive campaign in a distant country always brings, the fever, the fatigue, the heart-sickness, were producing their inevitable effect on the unhappy English forces. Ministers were obviously uneasy, and it was difficult to obtain from them either precise information or a general estimate of the military situation. Where they had no comfortable news to give, it seemed to them an impertinence that the Opposition should demand facts.

In September, 1780, the English Parliament was suddenly dissolved ; and though the resentment of the country at the mistakes of the politicians and the prolongation of the war was considerable, the Opposition was still weak. The Ministers demanded that their hands, in view of the dangers which threatened England, should be strengthened, and the Ministerial party was returned by a slightly increased majority. The Ministers regarded their victory at the polls both as a condonation of any mistakes they might have made and as a mandate for the vigorous prosecution of the war. In vain the Opposition pleaded for a return to common sense and for the opening of negotiations with a foe whom they could never hope to conquer. Fox's motion of conciliation

was rejected by a large majority, and the Ministers proceeded on their policy of violence and drift.

But in their very hour of triumph the crisis was approaching. It is clear that neither the Ministry nor the public appreciated the enormous difficulties against which the English generals had to contend, difficulties which were, in fact, insuperable, and which made ultimate success impossible. In the first place, the English were fighting against the most dangerous foe whom they had hitherto met, a foe of their own blood, of the same stubborn spirit, and with the same unconquerable love of freedom. Though there were many cowards and incapables among the Colonists, it is certain that, man for man, they were superior to the English soldiers in intelligence, in physique, in skill with the musket, in knowledge of the country, and in a passionate and individual devotion to their cause. They had, too, the enormous advantage which the English Army did not, and could not, possess: they were fighting in their own country and for their freedom; they were filled with an enthusiasm which was not only patriotic but religious, and which made the struggle bear in their eyes the character of a Holy War.

The English Army, though of considerable size, was scattered over a vast district, with bad roads, and sparsely populated. It was obliged to operate against an elusive foe and among a hostile population. It was difficult to bring the enemy to decisive action; the capture of an important town, which in a land of higher development would have been a blow at the heart of the country, had

no lasting effect; and the English were quite unable to follow up their successes. The chief towns of the Colonists fell one by one into the hands of the English, but the struggle continued, and the Americans hung still at the very gates. Great tracts of country submitted to the English troops, but, on their retirement, fell away from their allegiance.<sup>1</sup> The English could not effectively occupy the country, and where that is impossible, lasting success is impossible. Above all, the labour of feeding a large army in scattered positions at great distances from their bases and depôts was a task of supreme difficulty. These bases were 3,000 miles from England: the lines of communication were imperfectly held, and were liable to interruption by a mobile foe at any moment.

It was beginning to be seen, even by the King's advisers, that to conquer such a country was almost beyond their power, while to hold in subjection a land so vast, so thinly populated, where more than half of the fiercer spirits of the population would be permanently disaffected, would require an immense army, and would

<sup>1</sup> "Indeed, our affairs are in a bad condition. I do assure those gentlemen who have prayed for war and obtained the blessing they sought that they are at this instant in very great straits. The abused wealth of the country continues a little longer to feed its distemper. . . . But America is not subdued. Not one unattacked village which was originally adverse throughout that vast continent has yet submitted from love or terror. You have the ground you encamp on and you have no more. The cantonments of your troops and your dominions are exactly of the same extent. *You spread devastation, but you do not enlarge the sphere of authority.*"

EDMUND BURKE.

(*Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, 1777.*)

entail the greatest dangers and an enormous expense. They were anxious for peace, and for any honourable means of escape from an impossible position. But the Americans could accept nothing less than independence, and this the King refused to grant.

The English Commander-in-Chief, Sir Henry Clinton, found at last that the operations of his troops at great distances from the sea were involving him in serious difficulties.<sup>1</sup> He began to evacuate his distant posts and to concentrate his troops. In the autumn of 1781 he recalled Cornwallis, who, at the head of 7,000 troops, had been laying waste Virginia with fire and sword, and ordered him to retire to the sea and fortify himself in York Town, where it was hoped that the British fleet would be able to co-operate with him. To York Town Cornwallis retreated, followed by Lafayette, who, later on, was joined by Washington with a considerable body of troops. The end was near. Cornwallis was invested from the land side, and from the sea he was blockaded by a powerful French squadron, which had been able to forestall the English fleet and to take up its position at the mouth of the harbour. Against such odds

<sup>1</sup> "What has our war with America been but a continual series of marching and counter-marching, of taking and evacuating? . . . What have the operations of Lord Cornwallis been but marching and counter-marching from north to south, from the mountains to the sea, and from the sea to the mountains? This has been done to deceive the people here and make them believe that we have a proportionate interest in the country to the extent of territory traversed; and to confirm this, and to prove the certain subjugation of Virginia, Lord Dunmore was sent out to be Governor."

EDMUND BURKE (1781).

it was impossible long to struggle, and, on October 19, 1781, after a siege of 21 days, 6,000 English troops and 100 guns surrendered to Washington.

The disastrous news of the surrender of York Town reached England a month after the event. When the intelligence was taken to North he burst into an agony of grief. "It is all over," he cried. The Ministers and the public recognised that it was indeed "all over," and the Opposition redoubled their efforts and assailed the Ministry with the utmost violence. The King himself displayed a courage which it is impossible not to admire. He would never yield to America or encourage the traitors who formed the Opposition. During the early months of 1782 Lord George Germaine, the Secretary of War, and one of the bitterest foes of America, was raised by the command of the King to the peerage as Viscount Sackville—the reward of disaster and incompetence. To acknowledge the independence of America was to acknowledge that the sun of England had set for ever. We should be humiliated in the sight of the whole world, we should lose the West Indies and our Indian Empire, we should sink to the state of a third-rate Power, and be confined within our own shores. But the King could find no one to support him against facts so stubborn and so overwhelming. He accepted the resignation of North's Ministry, and a Whig Ministry was formed. Negotiations were opened with America, and a peace was signed in 1783 by which the independence of the American Colonies was fully recognised.

The defeat of the English has been ascribed to many causes. The Ministers attributed it to the incapacity of the generals, and the army to the mistakes of the politicians. The English generals were, indeed, men of inferior capacity, and deserved North's pathetic reproach: "I do not know whether our generals will frighten the enemy, but I know they frighten me whenever I think of them." As Pitt<sup>1</sup> said, the war was "a series of ineffective victories or severe defeats." Carlisle, in 1778, speaking of the great scale of everything in America, wrote: "We have nothing on a great scale with us but our blunders, our misconduct, our ruin, our losses, our disgraces, and misfortunes."

But the army might have retorted with equal justice that never had generals been so badly supported by Government. The Ministers made nearly every mistake which it was possible for Ministers to make. They had hopelessly underestimated the strength and determination of the Colonists. They sent out incapable generals, and they failed to feed the army with a constant flow

<sup>1</sup> "It was a most cursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unjust and diabolical war. It was conceived in injustice; it was nurtured and brought forth in folly; its footsteps were marked with blood, slaughter, persecution and devastation. The nation was drained of its best blood and of its vital resources of men and money. The expense of it was enormous, much beyond any former experience, and yet what had the British nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories . . . which filled the land with mourning for the loss of dear and valuable relations slain in the impious cause of enforcing unconditional submission, or narratives of the glorious exertions of men struggling in the holy cause of liberty."

WILLIAM PITT (1781).



of reinforcements. They conducted their peace negotiations as though they were certain of military success, and their warfare as though peace were a matter of to-morrow. No estimate or prophecy was fulfilled by events, and they seemed inspired by a weak and incurable optimism which always saw in the coming week a decisive victory and the end of the war.

The loss of the command of the sea was a most disastrous blow to England. It was difficult enough to feed and reinforce a great army at such a distance; but when a foreign fleet could interrupt our supplies and blockade our troops, the position became almost untenable. We must not, however, assign too high an importance to the intervention of France. The essential difficulties of the situation were enormous, and though the entry of France and Spain and Holland into the struggle undoubtedly hastened the end, the ultimate failure of England was certain. It is true that Washington's army was in the last stage of exhaustion, and it is possible that if England could have raised and despatched another army, and had been willing to continue hostilities for one or two years more, the submission of the Colonists might have been secured. But such a submission could only have been temporary. From the day when the first blood was shed at Lexington, America was lost to England. It was impossible to hold America without the consent of the Americans.

In any case the weariness of the public forbade the prolongation of the struggle. At its beginning and in its first stages the war was popular, but the supply of volunteers had soon ceased and the hire of

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German mercenaries and Indian auxiliaries, and the cruel devastations of the English generals, had given to the struggle an odious character in the eyes of the English people. A very different spirit indeed was seen when France and Spain entered the lists. The whole country rose in loyalty; and the men who would not volunteer for service in America came forward in tens of thousands to defend their country against their hereditary foes.

The English people had at least awaked from its apathy. It was disgusted by the miscalculations and the falsified prophecies of its leaders. It had been told, day after day, that the conquest of America was practically complete, and the disappointment was bitter and overwhelming. Six years of war, of ever-increasing debt,<sup>1</sup> of shocking loss of life, of a never-ending series of disasters, and of increasing dangers from our continental rivals, had completely weaned the public mind from its early affection for the war. It saw, too, that a temporary victory at the cost of further sacrifices would be unavailing. It saw that to hold America in subjection it would be necessary to maintain there a large standing army amid a hostile population, nursed in bitter hatred of our rule, 3,000 miles from England: a population waiting silently but eagerly for the moment when European complications might bind our hands. A rebellion raised at such a time it would be impossible to resist, and Great Britain would be obliged to retire in defeat and in a humiliation more bitter and more costly than the humiliation of the present peace.

<sup>1</sup> The war cost England over £100,000,000.

Thus ended the most unhappy war that England had ever undertaken. It was a war which in its inception and its conduct owed most of its disasters to the obstinacy and incapacity of the King and his Ministers. Their first mistake was to insist on the enforcement of a right which was both vexatious and unfruitful. Their second error was to trust to the advice of ignorant and prejudiced officials. The third mistake of the Ministers was to present to the Americans the alternative of starvation or rebellion, of unconditional submission or a war of extermination. Their essential and pervading folly was the failure to recognise that they had wholly misjudged the character and resources of the Americans. They had raised a problem which, deficient as they were in imagination and common sense, they were unable to solve. They were unwilling to face stubborn facts, and to proportion their policy to their strength; they were, therefore, compelled to continue a policy of drifting impotence, of which the end was disaster.

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATION, 1895-1900

WITH the close of the nineteenth century England seemed to many observers to be entering on a period of decline. From every quarter and in every society the same ominous tale was told. Some lamented an England of little men; the overgrowth of Cabinet rule; the decay of representative institutions; a Parliament of mediocrities; a Ministry of blunderers, likely to perish by virtue of its very size; an Opposition weak, timid, and divided; the absence of efficiency in the public service; a growing expenditure and a lessening trade; a declining birth-rate; an army unequal to its task. Others lamented an England no longer supreme in Asia, threatened on the seas by France and Russia, in its commerce by Germany and America. They foresaw graver troubles in the future: constant retreats and constant rebuffs, India threatened by Russia, China absorbed by the same devouring colossus, Germany cold, France hostile, and England isolated and hated by every nation. The weary Titan was becoming conscious of his burden. A disquiet, indefinite but profound, haunted the minds of men.

By the idealist a similar decay was discerned in the moral sphere. The material side of life was victorious: religious faith was weakening. Money had brought luxury and enervation, and the desire of money was gratified by crooked paths. The vast wealth of cosmopolitan speculators was spreading everywhere its influence, sometimes by open bribery, often by methods more subtle but not less dangerous. The golden calf was openly set up in the temple, and the high-born thronged to worship. The standard of political life had declined. It was no longer held ignoble for politicians to traffic in contracts, and the sensitiveness which felt a stain like a wound was out of favour. Great nobles thought it no humiliation to sell their titles for gold, and thousands of men and women were decoyed into ruin by the glamour of a great name. Gambling and betting were the amusement of multitudes and the business of not a few.

Things were seen in false perspective. The education which was to be a source of refinement, seemed rather to have brought the capacity to admire wrongly; and the cheap journalist corrupted and degraded whatever he touched. Hence sprang the worship of the violence which masquerades as strength: of the vulgarity which passes for native force. In our eagerness to be sincere we had thrown off the conventions which redeem life from half its grossness. It was in politics as in literature, in social life as in international intercourse. The sober ideals and decent modesty of our forefathers were to us mere cant and sentiment. The simple formulæ of life which sufficed for them were not good enough for

us. Force was held the only remedy : material success the only standard. We failed to ask ourselves the searching question : *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*

We saw the other nations pressing at our heels : we must be up and doing. A restless and suspicious egotism possessed us ; the dignity and self control and proud patience of the English seemed lost gifts. Hence came the neurotic excitement of our crowds, the hysteria of the music hall, the sensations of the cheap paper, the vulgarity of our fashionable politicians. Hence, too, came our impatience with all that is not born of strength, our scorn of the ideals which inspired our fathers and made possible the splendid activities of a past generation. Hence came our contempt for the rights of the small nations whom once it was our pride to defend, our anger with the stubborn race who turned a deaf ear to our counsels and demands. We could not bear to find a little nation in our path : self-conscious and irritable, we saw in them only vermin to be exterminated from the face of our earth. On them was vented the resentment which we had been bearing within our bosoms since first our pre-eminence was questioned by our rivals.

Such is the picture which men painted as their own especial fears affected them. It is needless to say that it was too dark. That there were grave symptoms in the social organism and the political outlook of 1895-1900 is true. But each man exaggerates his own particular hopes or fears, and in the main England is as sound to-day as she was fifty years ago. Our worst enemies cannot deny that we bore the

first disasters of this war with a self-control which did honour to our race. To see things as alarmists see them is to lose proportion. If the perfectly good man or the perfectly wise nation does not exist, yet experience tells us that the majority of mankind are passably good and moderately sensible, that they do not consciously act from wrong motives, and that, where they err greatly, they err through ignorance. The English people has always been an honest, a shrewd, and a generous people; and at the worst the fault which has been at the root of the troubles of the last two years is the fault from which we have suffered and recovered before. We have been weakened by a certain moral lassitude, born of past energy; by a certain arrogance and grossness, born of too much prosperity. Too indifferent to examine with intelligence the statements and the counsels of our advisers, we have been left the easy victims of hare-brained adventurers.

It is an old tale, and will be told again when another century has passed away. A nation lives by successive periods of strength and weakness, of energy and languor. The costly results of our error we are now beginning dimly to see, and we shall quickly become again the England which after 1781 arose from its sleep: the England alert, strong, silent, and self-controlled, which was able, after countless humiliations, to save herself by her exertions and Europe by her example.

## CHAPTER II

### SOUTH AFRICA TO 1896

THE history of South Africa is in the main the history of the antagonism of the English and the Dutch and of the dealings of the two races with the natives. From the interconnection of these two causes have sprung nearly all the troubles which have made South Africa the despair of statesmen and the grave of reputations, and which seem likely for many years to make it a land of racial unrest.

The first discoverers of South Africa were the Portuguese, who, neglecting the healthier districts of Cape Colony, made their settlements on the south-east coast in a district which they still hold. In the middle of the seventeenth century a Dutch crew, who had been shipwrecked in Table Bay, bore to Holland a glowing description of the great advantages of such a port as a half-way house to the East Indies. The Dutch East India Company sent out a body of settlers who raised a fort, and in 1689 the number of the colonists was increased by three hundred French Huguenots who were flying from the persecutions which seemed to await them in France. The Dutch and the Huguenots soon blended by intermarriage, and the whole body of settlers, casting off those ties of home and blood which bind most emigrants to



the mother country, formed a new nation with individual characteristics and a patriotism of its own.

They were a pastoral people, not given to agriculture in the strict sense of the word, but living isolated lives, and journeying in their waggons from spot to spot with their flocks and herds. They became rearers of cattle and great hunters, and they developed not only the qualities of self-reliance and courage which were necessary to their lives, but also that stubborn love of freedom which has given them both a stamp of individuality and an impatience of control, and has made them the most difficult of subjects. They became known as Boers, *i.e.*, farmers or peasants, and though they were ruled by a Dutch governor, they were continually at issue with the East India Company until, in 1795, the division between the Orange and the new democratic party enabled England to land a force at Cape Town and become masters with little opposition. Free trade was promised, but the promise was not kept; the farmers were not protected against the inroads of the natives; and by the year 1800 the British administration had become "thoroughly corrupt."<sup>1</sup> At the Peace of Amiens (1802) the colony was restored to the Netherlands, then the Batavian Republic. Soon the Napoleonic war broke out afresh, and Holland being on the French side, an English force was in 1806 landed at Cape Town, and, after some fighting, possession was resumed. In 1813, the restored Prince of Orange agreed, for a total sum of £6,000,000, to cede to Great Britain the Cape

<sup>1</sup> Theal, "Story of South Africa," pp. 120-6; "History of South Africa," vol. ii. 315; iii. 32-60.

Colony and some settlements in South America ; and so in 1814 the Colony became a part of the British Empire.

It does not appear that during the early years of the British occupation the Dutch were treated with harshness, but in the years from 1815 to 1836 constant disputes arose, caused in the main by a misunderstanding of the Dutch character and by an unwillingness on the part of the English to frame their policy in reasonable accordance with the prejudices and wants of the governed. Specially deep resentment was caused by the substitution of English for Dutch in all judicial proceedings.<sup>1</sup>

The emancipation of the slaves<sup>2</sup> throughout the British Empire, a measure framed with the best intentions, was worked in South Africa without discretion and without fairness. There was a general willingness there to abolish slavery ;<sup>3</sup> and measures were voluntarily taken to extinguish it by making all female children free at birth. But our officials aimed rather at coercion than at persuasion. The crowning evil was that of the inadequate sum allotted to the compensation of slave-owners at the Cape—£1,200,000, instead of

<sup>1</sup> See Theal, "Story of South Africa," pp. 120, 139, 150, 159, 160, 175-94. "Few people," says Mr. Theal, "had so much cause to be discontented" (p. 175). Comp. his larger "History," vol. iii. pp. 178, 185, 187, 237, 242, 264, 275, 335.

<sup>2</sup> It may be noted that when the British first sought the lordship of the Cape they promised to *maintain* slavery, as against the French, who were then proposing to abolish it. Comp. Theal's "History of South Africa," ii. 293-4, 314-5 ; iii. 79 ; and his "History of the Boers," 1887, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Theal, "History of the Boers," p. 64.

the £3,000,000 which was the valuation of the English Government—only a fraction was really paid, by reason of the utterly unjust method of payment. All claims had to be presented in England, so that every claimant was obliged to forfeit a large proportion to agents and speculators, and many never received anything, some disdaining later to accept the fractions offered them. The whole process of agriculture was upset and paralysed by the act of emancipation, and most of the natives refused to do any further work. The Dutch found themselves deprived of the labour that was necessary for the rearing of their cattle, and they were threatened with ruin.<sup>1</sup>

Within a period of a few years nearly ten thousand Dutch left Cape Colony to seek a new home in an unknown land. Many of them perished by the way of fever or starvation or at the hands of natives. The greater number crossed the Orange River, passed through the great plains of the land which became afterwards the Orange Free State, and advanced northward until they came in contact with the Matabele. With this brave and savage tribe they had many a battle, finally defeating and driving them beyond the Limpopo River, where they set up a new kingdom which lasted until its destruction in 1893 by the British South Africa Company.

Of the territories thus left vacant by the Matabele, territories now known as the Transvaal, the Boers took possession. Another body of Boers, under the guidance of Pieter Retief, made a trek

<sup>1</sup> Comp. Theal, "Hist. of South Africa," iii. 413, sq.; Cloete, "Hist. of the Great Boer Trek," ed. 1900, pp. 35-58; Theal, "History of the Boers," pp. 60-70.

into the south-east of the country now known as Natal, and established there a Dutch republic. But this action, which gave the Dutch a dangerous command of the sea, alarmed the Government at Cape Town, and the English drove the Boers from these districts and proclaimed them a British Colony.<sup>1</sup>

The Boers who dwelt between the Orange River and the Vaal River, and those who made their homes between the Vaal and the Limpopo, gradually came to form two separate communities, each composed of still smaller communities united by the slender tie of mutual protection.

The Southern Boers who bordered on the British territory of Cape Colony were of weaker fibre than their northern kinsmen, and were unable to keep order among the natives who surrounded them. The English Governor held that their weakness was a menace to the peace of Cape Colony, and with the general approval of the Cape Dutch, though at the cost of a battle (Boomplaats) with the Dutch of the district, he annexed their land to the British Empire in 1848, under the name of the Orange River Sovereignty.<sup>2</sup> But the annexation brought little peace, and, finding the task of repressing the natives not only difficult but disastrous,<sup>3</sup> the Government in 1854

<sup>1</sup> Of this episode a full and apparently fair narrative is given in "The Great Boer Trek," by Cloete. Comp. Theal's "History of the Boers," ch. v.

<sup>2</sup> Theal, "History of South Africa," vol. iv. ch. xlvii.

<sup>3</sup> See in Mr. Theal's "Story of South Africa," pp. 259-268, a concise account of our military reverses. As to the mismanagement and worse, see his longer work, vol. iv. ch. 48. "The country at the time," he sums up, "was really in a state of anarchy."

guaranteed the independence of the country, to which the name of the Orange Free State was given.<sup>1</sup> The history of this State up to 1899 was one of peaceful progress. It was fortunate in securing as its fourth President, in 1865, Mr. J. H. Brand, a man of great tact and prudence; and it has been always distinguished by the purity of its administration and the excellence of its institutions.

The Boers north of the Vaal were of a more warlike and determined character, and the English Government, unwilling to increase its responsibilities, had already determined to allow them also to work out their destiny alone. It had been found necessary in the Orange River Sovereignty to call for the help of the "rebel" commandant Pretorius, who, since 1848, had been proscribed, with a reward offered for his capture. There was no choice, and in 1852 the Sand River Convention was concluded, by which the British Government guaranteed independence to the Transvaal Boers.

Their history is chequered. Jealousies arose among them; and in 1852 they were divided into four communities or republics. But self-interest and the necessity for common action were gradually forming these communities into one; and in 1864 M. W. Pretorius was chosen as President of the South African Republic,

<sup>1</sup> This policy was only after long dispute decided on by the British Government. In 1851 Earl Grey laid it down in a despatch that it "should be a settled point in the Imperial policy." See Theal, iv. 491. It was strongly opposed not only by many of the Dutch and most of the British settlers in the territory, but by many of the Cape Dutch. The British Special Commissioner had positively to get up a republican propaganda. *Id.*, ch. 48.

while a body of law and a constitution were drafted and adopted by the Volksraad.

The white population of the South African Republic in 1864 was about thirty thousand; and the ties that bound the population together were somewhat loose. It was difficult and almost impossible for the central Government to collect taxes and to carry on the administration of the country. In 1872 Pretorius was obliged to resign his office, and was succeeded by Mr. Burgers, a Cape Dutchman, a man of upright life but of little force of character. The financial position of the country was becoming deplorable; there was little trade; and the Kaffirs at various points menaced the sparse population with invasion.

The welfare of the Boers of the two Republics was naturally a matter of concern to the Dutch population of Cape Colony. The Boers were in many cases their brothers and sisters or sons and daughters, and the claims of blood and race are paramount. On the other hand, the English population of Cape Colony regarded them with unconcealed dislike. The Loyalists, as those of English birth were called, formed the smaller section of the inhabitants of the Colony, and they had not been long enough resident in Africa to acquire a local patriotism. They were therefore still in close touch with English politicians. There had always been a rivalry between the English and the Dutch of Cape Colony, and this rivalry gradually became rather political than racial. On the whole it may be said that the Loyalist party consisted of townsmen engaged in trade, while the Dutch, who formed the majority of the inhabitants, were the landowners and the

agricultural population. Thus to the cleavage of race there was added a divergence of life and occupation, and it is necessary to bear in mind these essential differences, for they go far to explain the unhappy rivalry which has brought ruin on South Africa.

The difficulties of the Boers were exaggerated by those colonial politicians who had for some time seen in the straits of the Boers a ground for intervening in their affairs and annexing their land. While Shepstone is charged with telling the Boers that if he "took his hand from the Zulus" the latter would overwhelm them, he has put on record, by way of disproof of the charge, the statement that the Boers, to his knowledge, had no fear of the Zulus, considering themselves perfectly able to defeat any native attack.<sup>1</sup> And as it is certain that no considerable body of Boers ever petitioned for annexation, the summing-up of history must be that the achievement of that process by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, with the reluctant and bewildered consent of President Burgers, was a result of the lack of organisation incident to the first stages of a pastoral community with an unpractical and distrusted head, and was due neither to the absolute needs nor to the avowed wishes of the people.<sup>2</sup> Very soon afterwards they sent to England a deputation consisting of Mr. Kruger and Dr. Jorissen, who made their appeal to Lord Carnarvon, but in vain. In 1878 came a

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Rider Haggard, "The Last Boer War," 1899, p. 63. Comp. Theal, "Story of South Africa," p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> Even Mr. J. P. Fitzpatrick admits in so many words that Shepstone "rushed the annexation." "The Transvaal from Within," ed. 1900, p. 20. Comp. pp. 13-14, 18, 22.

second deputation, this time consisting of Mr. Kruger, Mr. Joubert, and Mr. E. Bok, but this also had no success.

The annexation of the Republic in April, 1877, was scarcely noticed in England, and though it was resented by the Dutch in Cape Colony, it seemed likely that its results would be those which had followed a hundred similar actions, and that our new subjects would accept the situation and the privileges of English citizenship. But the fatal ignorance that seems to dog the steps of English statesmen in their dealings with South Africa did not permit the English Ministry to see that the Boers preferred freedom and their own constitution to the most civilised government in the world. A series of mistakes resulted in a dangerous outbreak. The Transvaal Boers were indignant that their Republic should have been annexed without their consent and against their will. Their indignation increased when they were refused the representative institutions which Sir T. Shepstone had definitely promised;<sup>1</sup> and, moved by a destiny which seems omnipotent and omnipresent in our dealings with South Africa, the English Government had chosen as administrator of the Transvaal a military officer who may have had admirable qualities in his own profession, but who was, from his want of sympathy and of adaptability, totally unfit to rule men of the temper and character of the Boers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the admissions of Sir Bartle Frere in a letter of April 20, 1879. "Life of Sir Bartle Frere," 1895, ii. 311. Comp. p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> See the admissions made by Mr. J. P. Fitzpatrick in "The Transvaal from Within," ed. 1900, pp. 14, 21, 25. Comp. Theal, "Story of South Africa," p. 343.



The new Liberal Ministry of 1880, though they had opposed the annexation of the Transvaal, found themselves in a difficult position. They sought the advice of the South African officials, and were assured by them that the discontent in the Republic was factitious and of no account. The Dutch, they were told, were prone to patriotic meetings, but were quite unwilling to fight; and a little timely severity and the parade of a few hundred British troops would soon bring them to their senses. The Boers, therefore, were told that the annexation of their Republic could not be annulled.

But the English Government did not know with what men they had to deal. In December, 1880, the Boers chose three leaders, M. W. Pretorius, Paul Kruger, and P. Joubert, and proclaimed the revival of the South African Republic. The Boer farmers rose to a man in support of the triumvirate, and the isolated bands of British troops were soon defeated or besieged. Sir George Colley, the Governor of Natal, raised a body of troops and marched to the border, but he was defeated by Joubert at Laing's Nek, and later on at Ingogo. On February 26th our forces were completely routed on Majuba Hill, and Colley himself was killed.<sup>1</sup>

The British Government despatched considerable reinforcements and appointed Sir Frederick Roberts

<sup>1</sup> It is commonly forgotten that at Laing's Nek General Colley had only 570 men to some thousands of Boers, and at Majuba 554 men against over 1,000 Boers. At Majuba the British loss was 92 killed and 134 wounded. In the three battles of Laing's Nek, Ingogo, and Majuba, Colley lost some 250 killed and had over 300 wounded.

as Commander-in-Chief. What the final issue would have been, if the campaign had been allowed to proceed, it is difficult to say. The British troops were numerous, their commander was a skilful and successful soldier, and the Boers were few in number and not used to regular warfare. But, in spite of their detractors, they were splendid fighters, admirable marksmen, filled with the fire of patriotic and religious fervour, and they were fighting in a country of which they knew every inch.<sup>1</sup> It is almost certain that they would have been assisted by their brothers of the Orange Free State; and they would undoubtedly have received the passive, if not the active, assistance of their kinsmen throughout South Africa. The English Ministry, faced by such a resistance, had already realised before Majuba that the annexation of the South African Republic had been undertaken in ignorance and through imperfect information. They recognised that the temporary conquest and submission of the

<sup>1</sup> "It has been proved to us that the Boers are at all events brave soldiers; that they are skilled in the use of arms; that they are physically at least a match even for English soldiers. The Transvaal is a country as large as France—a wild and difficult country—and it is perfectly evident to every one that if we are to hold it down by force we must permanently maintain a number of troops at least equal to the number of our possible opponents. Well, we know also that the Orange Free State, which is a neighbouring territory, would make common cause with their co-religionists and men of the same nationality in the Transvaal; and therefore I say that it is perfectly certain that not less than from 15,000 to 20,000 English troops must be permanently stationed there if we are to hold the country by force against the will of the inhabitants."

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, 1881.

Boers would inevitably lead to permanent disaffection in the Transvaal, to another rising in ten or twenty years, and to a dangerous resentment among the Dutch in Cape Colony. They accordingly determined that a policy of "magnanimity" was both more prudent and more honourable than the policy of crushing the Boers with an overwhelming force, and they had sent to General Colley authorisation to treat with the Boers for a truce and a settlement. By mischance the negotiations came to nothing. The instructions to General Roberts were more peremptory. An armistice was arranged, and a fortnight later preliminary terms were settled by which the Transvaal State recovered its independence under the suzerainty of the British Crown. These terms were formally inserted in the Convention of Pretoria of 1881.

The effects of this act of "surrender" are somewhat difficult to estimate. The supporters of Mr. Gladstone's policy have always pointed to the danger of a racial conflict which the Convention removed; while the opponents of the Convention have deemed it a proof of weakness, a loss of prestige, and a direct cause of all the troubles which have clouded the history of South Africa during the last twenty years.<sup>1</sup> There is much

<sup>1</sup> It is instructive to remember that the repeal of the Stamp Act was regarded by the foolish counsellors of George III. as a cause of the American rebellion. Compare Burke's words:—"I state, Sir, these particulars, because this act of spirit and fortitude has lately been, in the circulation of the season, and in some hazardous declamations in this house, attributed to timidity. If, Sir, the conduct of the Ministry, in proposing the repeal, had arisen from timidity with regard

to be said for either view. On the one hand, England, both by tradition and sympathy, has generally protected the rights of free communities; and it was contrary to her ideal that she should annex a free nation against the declared wishes of a vast majority of the population. Four facts, which confront us to-day, support the practical side of the "surrender" policy: the extraordinary strength of the Boers in war, the support of the Orange Free State, the undisguised sympathy of the Cape Dutch, and the difficulty of holding a vast and disaffected district.

On the other hand, the Loyalists and their supporters in England held that England had forfeited her high place among nations by submitting to the disgrace of Majuba; that the Boers would not appreciate a policy of magnanimity; and that every concession would increase in the Boer minds the sense of their own importance and their contempt for their English neighbours. The bitterness of this mortification has remained to the present day; and it has been turned to account with fatal effect by the South African Press in their support of a policy of "firmness."

It is the duty of a cool observer to attempt to disentangle facts from prejudices, to allow sentiment its due weight, and above all things to let common sense be the basis of decision. That the policy of the British Government was a proof of its weakness is scarcely true. It is too often

to themselves, it would have been greatly to be condemned. Interested timidity disgraces as much in the Cabinet, as personal timidity does in the field. But timidity, with regard to the well-being of our country, is heroic virtue."  
*On American Taxation.*

assumed that the Ministry did not think of negotiating with the Boers until after the disaster at Majuba, and that the policy of generosity was born of defeat. This is inconsistent with the facts. The fault of the Gladstone Ministry was that it accepted too implicitly the assurances of Sir Owen Lanyon; but when the Boers rose in revolt and it was certain that they were in earnest in their desire for independence, the Government were at once committed by their pledges at the General Election to a policy of compromise. Imperial negotiations had begun with President Brand of the Free State even before Laing's Nek, and the negotiations after Majuba were not the beginning of a new policy but the continuation of an old.<sup>1</sup> It would have been far easier for the Ministers to continue the war, to yield to the pressure of the Loyalists in Cape Colony and of the war party at home. They chose the more difficult part, and the one which

<sup>1</sup> This statement has been challenged, but the records are clear. Lord Kimberley's first communication to President Brand was on January 11th, a fortnight before Laing's Nek; his second on January 26th, two days before; the purport being that if the Boers would give up armed opposition a settlement would be offered. On February 13th Mr. Kruger replied that if the annexation were cancelled the Boers would gladly treat. Thereupon Lord Kimberley telegraphed to General Colley that if the Boers ceased fighting, commissioners would be appointed to frame a settlement; and General Colley accordingly wrote to Mr. Kruger on February 21st, stipulating for an answer within forty-eight hours. Unfortunately Mr. Kruger had left the Boer camp on a journey, so that the letter did not reach him in time; and General Colley, thinking his proposal rejected, decided to attack. Majuba was the result.

would almost certainly bring upon them the greater unpopularity. On the whole, it seems that in very perplexing circumstances, and where the wisest could scarcely forecast the future, they arrived at the more prudent decision. This opinion at the present moment may be an unpopular one; but it is probable that, when the history of the last two years comes to be written, our embarrassments will justify the unwillingness of the Gladstone Ministry to continue a policy which threatened to embroil the whole of South Africa.

The history of the South African Republic during the next few years is chiefly concerned with attempts on the part of Boer adventurers to enlarge the territory of the Transvaal and to seek an outlet to the sea—attempts which were in every case successfully opposed by the British authorities. It was held to be necessary that the Transvaal should not be permitted to annex territory which might give her a seaport and enable her, in union with a European Power, to become a serious menace to British interests.

Late in 1883 a third deputation of Boers came to London—this time to secure a modification of the Convention of 1881. Their representations were successful; and Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, drew up, in concert with them, a new Convention which is known as the Convention of London of 1884. In this treaty the Articles of the Convention of 1881 were replaced by a new set of Articles, in which the declaration of the control of Great Britain was considerably modified.

The most important point, and the one which bears most directly upon the diplomacy precedent to the present war, is the omission of

the word "Suzerainty" which appeared in the preamble to the Convention of 1881. It is certain that Lord Derby absolutely omitted that preamble and replaced it by a new preamble. In the draft<sup>1</sup> of the Convention which is now in the possession of the Transvaal Government, and a fac-simile of which was printed in a despatch from the State Secretary, Lord Derby's *ipsissima verba* are quoted. He says that the preamble of 1881, being enclosed "within a black line," is proposed to be omitted. Moreover, the following words in the last paragraph of the Convention of 1881, "subject to the Suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs, and successors," have been crossed through by Lord Derby's pen. This evidence is clear, and it seems to be an unanswerable refutation of Mr. Chamberlain's argument, in his despatch of October 16, 1897, that Her Majesty's Suzerainty still existed, and that it justified the action of Great Britain and her refusal to submit the questions at issue to arbitration.<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to lay stress on this matter, for a study of the despatches will make it quite plain that the claim of Suzerainty and the conse-

<sup>1</sup> See reduced facsimile in Appendix A. It is given with the Transvaal Government's despatch of April 16, 1898, reproduced in Blue Book C. 9507, pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> It is sometimes argued that the acceptance of the Suzerainty in 1881 made that a permanent fact. In reply, it is sufficient to point to the admission of Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords (Oct. 17, 1899) that in order to secure the withdrawal of the term Suzerainty Mr. Kruger made "considerable territorial and other sacrifices." Sir Edward Clarke, it will be remembered, emphatically repudiated Mr. Chamberlain's contention on legal grounds. (Hansard, vol. 77, p. 303.)

quent fear and suspicion which such a claim engendered among the Boers were a powerful obstacle in the path of a friendly compromise, and of a peaceful issue to the negotiations.

In 1885 occurred an event of cardinal importance in the history of South Africa. The gold beds of the Witwatersrand were discovered, and the immigration of aliens made enormous strides. Within ten years from this date there were nearly one hundred thousand men, women, and children of European or American birth at Johannesburg and other mining towns, while the Boers—men, women, and children—hardly numbered seventy thousand souls.<sup>1</sup> An influx so overwhelming was not welcome to President Kruger and to the ruling class, while the pastoral Boers looked upon the new-comers with undisguised dislike. They were men of various nationalities, shrewd, keen, and pushing. It would be extravagant to expect a high code of social or financial morality among the inhabitants of a new mining town; and the men who were fast making of Johannesburg the greatest and richest town of South Africa were, it must be allowed, a somewhat motley crew. The greater number of them were British subjects, a fact which in itself was sufficient to alarm the Boers, while those who came from other countries were in many

<sup>1</sup> According to the census of 1890—imperfect, but the chief source of knowledge—the *white population of the whole Republic* then was only 119,128. Of these 60,000 were Outlanders, and of them 30,000 were from Cape Colony, Natal, and the Free State, while only about 12,000 were of British origin.



cases men of questionable antecedents. Those of the new-comers who seemed likely to gain the greatest influence and the greatest wealth were Jews. Though the pastoral population was unaffected, the Boers soon found that their officials and the members of their parliamentary assembly were being corrupted by the money of the aliens, and they viewed with alarm the time when the latter should secure the franchise and completely outvote the old citizens of the Transvaal. They could not prevent or delay immigration, and they took in self-defence the only step which seemed to them possible. Alterations were made in the franchise, and the term of years which had been necessary to qualify for this franchise was gradually extended until it was impossible for a stranger to acquire the full rights of citizenship until he had been in the country fourteen years. The inevitable results followed. The Outlanders, as they were called, resented a legislation which was obviously aimed at them, and they were irritated by a number of vexatious restrictions and petty grievances, of which, though the individual item might be small, the aggregate effect was serious.

Though the limitation of the franchise was in no way a contravention of the Articles of the Convention,<sup>2</sup> it was an unfortunate policy, and the President would have been better advised if he had allowed the inhabitants of Johannesburg to elect some members to the Volksraad. But there was a serious danger. In the Transvaal, as in the

<sup>2</sup> As to this, it has to be noted that a new franchise law, effecting a restraint, was passed as early as 1882, under the first Convention, and that no objection was ever made to this by the "Suzerain" power. See also Note p. 78.

of an unyielding attitude. Their motives were obviously and naturally selfish. Their only ambition, in a word, was to increase the profits of the mines.<sup>1</sup> The leader of the financial group said openly that the Outlanders "did not care a fig" for the franchise.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hays Hammond's utterance in London on November 18, 1899, is significant;<sup>3</sup> and Mr. Rudd, a colleague of the above gentleman, took no pains to conceal the policy of the capitalists, a policy which is practically a system of slavery.<sup>4</sup>

We may, therefore, without injustice, regard the

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Fitzpatrick, as last cited.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the letter of Mr. Lionel Phillips, June 16, 1894 (given in Appendix to the Cape Colony Report of Select Committee in the Jameson Raid, A. 2913, 5/96), as to the general indifference on this head.

<sup>3</sup> "There are in South Africa millions of Kaffirs, and it does seem preposterous that we are not able to obtain 70,000 or 80,000 Kaffirs to work upon the mines. . . . With good government there should be an abundance of labour, and with an abundance of labour *there will be no difficulty in cutting down wages*, because it is preposterous to pay a Kaffir the present wages. He would be quite as well satisfied—in fact, *he would work longer—if you gave him half the amount.*" (From the full report in *Financial News* of November 26).

<sup>4</sup> "If they could only get one-half the natives to work three months of the year, it would work wonders. He was not pleading for the mines, or urging the views of capitalists, but from the point of view of progress, and the general prosperity of the country. *They should try some cogent form of inducement or practically compel the native, through taxation or in some other way, to contribute his quota to the good of the community, and to a certain extent he would then have to work. . . . If under the cry of civilisation we in Egypt lately mowed down 10,000 or 20,000 Dervishes with Maxims, surely it cannot be considered a hardship to compel the natives in South Africa to give three months in the year to do a little honest work.*"

There has been in truth an unpleasant flavour of finance

wages question as one of the most powerful motives of an agitation which involved the Transvaal in the calamity of the Jameson Raid in 1896 and in the South African War of 1899.

The leaders of the capitalist party had intimate relations with Mr. Cecil Rhodes, who was Prime Minister of Cape Colony, Managing Director of the British South Africa Company, and a Director and a large shareholder of one of the great mining and finance companies of the Rand. Mr. Rhodes was apparently encouraged by many Imperial officers in South Africa, and, it has been persistently stated, by the English Colonial Office. He obtained permission from the Colonial Secretary to incorporate a corner of Bechuanaland into the territory of the Chartered Company; and this position was chosen as the headquarters of a body of troops raised by the Company and under the command of English regular officers.

It was arranged that the capitalists should

throughout the whole history of the war. Compare the following utterances:

"We have done our duty in preserving and protecting the greatest commercial asset in the world—Her Majesty's flag."—MR. RHODES, February 23, 1900.

"If it were true that the war was caused by capitalists or undertaken on behalf of the mines, the Empire owes them a deep debt of gratitude. . . . South Africa, after all, is not a dear asset to the Empire at the cost of the present war."—MR. C. D. RUDD, November 6, 1900.

"If we for one moment consider the immense value of both of the States that Great Britain has just acquired, we cannot but come to the conclusion that the money expended in this war, which is roughly estimated at from £60,000,000 to £70,000,000, is of minor importance."—MR. J. B. ROBINSON, November 7, 1900.

gather together and arm a force of volunteers in Johannesburg, and that on the ground of a possible danger to the peaceful inhabitants an invitation should be sent to the Imperial troops. A particularly nauseous element in the conspiracy was the concoction of a letter some weeks before the proposed outbreak, signed by the principal conspirators, imploring help for the sake of the defenceless women and children. This letter, cunningly calculated to appeal to the credulity and pity of the English public, was placed in the hands of the leader of the Imperial troops to be dated and published when occasion should serve. A touch of comedy was given to the tragic event by its premature publication in an English paper.<sup>1</sup> On a given day the English troops were to start from Pitsani, ride rapidly across the Transvaal, and arrive at Johannesburg at the moment when the Outlanders had arisen in rebellion. A *coup d'état* would then be effected, the Boer oligarchy would be taken by surprise, and the conspiracy would meet with immediate success.

It is unnecessary to relate the circumstances which led to a ludicrous but well-deserved fiasco—how the troops started before the Outlanders were ready; how they were met at Krugersdorp by a small body of Boers, defeated in a few hours, and taken prisoners; how the Outlanders, who had little courage and no discipline and were torn by internal dissension, were forced to surrender their arms. Their leaders were arrested, tried, convicted of treason and sentenced, first to

<sup>1</sup> It appeared in *The Times* on January 1, 1896, the day of Dr. Jameson's capture.

death, ultimately only to fines ; while the troopers themselves, by the exercise of a clemency on the part of the Boer President no less magnanimous<sup>1</sup> than diplomatic, were handed over to the English authorities on the understanding that they should receive a trial and the proper punishment of their misconduct. They were conveyed to England, and the rank and file were released without a trial, while the officers were sentenced to short terms of easy imprisonment from which they were soon relieved.<sup>2</sup> The sympathy of the public with the ill-starred expedition made it practically impossible for the Government to resist the demand for their release. A claim made by the Transvaal Government against the Chartered Company for heavy damages seemed justified, but Mr. Chamberlain treated the claim with ridicule, and declined, during the four years which followed, to press its justice upon the Company. An inquiry into the origin and conduct of the Jameson Raid was made by the Cape Parliament, and it was proved that Mr. Rhodes, in spite of his position as Prime Minister of Cape Colony, had, without the knowledge of his colleagues, made arrangements for the invasion of a friendly country. Another inquiry was instituted by the British Parliament, but little new evidence was discovered ; and certain telegrams, which might have thrown light on the movements of the organisers of the Raid, were withheld in spite of the protests of some of the members of the Parliamentary Committee.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fitzpatrick acknowledges it as the President's "game of magnanimity" (ed. cited, p. 147).

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Jameson, sentenced to fifteen months, was released after four months and five days.

The result of the inquiry was profoundly unsatisfactory. It was felt by every one that facts of supreme importance were hidden from sight; and dissatisfaction was increased when Mr. Chamberlain, who had concurred in the condemnation of Mr. Rhodes's treachery, rose in the House of Commons to deliver a eulogy on that gentleman which was inconsistent with the verdict of the Committee and was apparently unnecessary.<sup>1</sup>

It was asserted at the time, and the assertion has been persistently repeated, that the Jameson Raid was arranged with the cognisance of some of the officials of the Colonial Office<sup>2</sup> and not without the support and sympathy of august members of English society. It was stated that Mr. Rhodes's friends had threatened to make known the complicity of the Colonial Office unless Mr. Chamberlain consented to whitewash Mr. Rhodes in the House of Commons and to reinstate him in the position which he formerly occupied in the regard of the British public. It is impossible to separate facts from surmise in a mystery so dark; but one thing is certain. There was a secret which it was deemed impolitic to expose, and its concealment had the worst possible effect in increasing the suspicion and resentment of the Transvaal people.

<sup>1</sup> Speech of July 26, 1897. This eulogy was delivered after the Parliamentary Committee had reported that Mr. Rhodes, among other things, had "deceived the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government," and had further deceived his subordinates. (Report, p. xvi).

<sup>2</sup> Miss Flora Shaw's evidence at the inquiry apparently favours this theory. See, in particular, questions and answers 8913-8918 in Report of Select Committee, p. 471.

Probably no event has ever wrought such mischief in South Africa as the Jameson Raid of 1895. Its immediate effect was the fall of Mr. Rhodes from power, and the complete alienation of Dutch support and sentiment in Cape Colony. For some years previous to this event the two races had been slowly but surely drawing together;<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Rhodes, with a prudence and a tact which his subsequent error throws into strong relief, had taken every means to conciliate the Dutch and to secure the support of the Afrikaner Bond to his political measures.<sup>2</sup> English and Dutch, though still in some measure distinguished by differences of temperament, arising out of different modes of life, were learning to respect one another; and most observers thought it not too sanguine to look forward to the time when the races would be united in common political aims and would consent to work together for the prosperity of South Africa. In a moment the whole edifice of conciliation was cast to the ground; and like a storm from a summer sky, the sinister episode of the Raid fell upon a quiet land. Every bitter suspicion, every fear, every feeling of jealousy, which the events of the last few years had apparently laid to rest, were reawakened in Cape Colony.

The Orange Free State, which had for some time consistently urged reforms upon President Kruger, and which was before this date more in sympathy with the progressive policy of Cape

<sup>1</sup> This is admitted by Mr. Fitzpatrick, ed. cited, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> See the biography, "Cecil Rhodes," by "Vindex," 1900, pp. 265, 277, 279.

Colony than with the policy of the Transvaal Ministry, put aside all its hesitation and concluded a defensive alliance with the State which had been so treacherously invaded. In the Transvaal the Progressive party, which had long advocated the adoption of moderate reforms, was silenced by the unwarrantable attack on the liberties of their State.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Kruger believed, and the majority of the burghers were of his opinion, that the Jameson raid was the indirect, if not the direct, outcome of British policy. He saw in it the preliminary to a stronger and more dangerous onslaught, and he determined that, come what might, any future attack should find the Boers united, ready and strong. Fortifications were built, immense quantities of arms were imported, and from the beginning of 1896 till the declaration of war in 1899 the Transvaal was arming with quiet determination.<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that such preparations were both prudent and reasonable. The Boers were justified in their suspicion, for no impartial man who remembers that the Jameson Raid was organised by the English Prime Minister of an English colony; that Imperial officials of high rank in South Africa were directly implicated; that the troopers of the Chartered Company were under English regular officers, and had encamped on land which had been granted by the Colonial Office to Mr. Rhodes; that the goodwill, if not the collusion, of the Colonial Office had been secured; that the troopers had been pardoned

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that General Louis Botha was of the Progressive party.



and the officers had been punished with nominal penalties; that the instigator of the conspiracy had been welcomed with effusion by English society and defended with unction from his place in Parliament by the Colonial Secretary—no reasonable man can deny that a chain of circumstances so strong must inevitably create in the minds of the Boers the fear that England had designs upon their independence. That this fear was much exaggerated is true. The British Government, as a whole, had no wish to attack the independence of the Transvaal; but that Mr. Rhodes and the English in South Africa, supported by a powerful body of opinion in England, were watching the opportunity to annex the Transvaal with its gold-mines to the Empire, is certainly true.

Thus the two powerful and fatal motives of hatred and suspicion were at work; and every advance or proposal made by the British Government was regarded by the Transvaal rulers as either a piece of hypocrisy or a veiled attempt upon their independence. These suspicions proved the most potent cause of the misunderstandings which have borne their fruit in the war of 1899.

\* Some arming there was shortly before the Raid (see the Outlander manifesto of December 27, 1895), the "Drifts" question having had a serious aspect, and the Boer Executive having reason to apprehend some outbreak; but the main process of armament occurred later. See p. 84 and pp. 130, 131. See also Mr. Fitzpatrick's final admissions, "The Transvaal From Within," p. 98; and compare the article on "Natal and the Transvaal in 1890" in *The Times* of November 7, 1899, and a letter in the *St. James's Gazette* of August 29, 1899.

## CHAPTER III

### SOUTH AFRICA, 1896-1899

IN 1897 the horizon seemed to be clearing. In Cape Colony the only serious point at issue between the Dutch and the Ministry in England was the attitude of Great Britain towards the two Republics. On all other points the Dutch were devoted subjects and good friends ;<sup>\*</sup> and the future of Cape Colony and South Africa depended entirely on the willingness of the English Ministry to take up a conciliatory attitude towards the Transvaal, and to avoid every suspicion of an encroachment on its rights. The Dutch saw that the Loyalists in South Africa were open advocates of a coercive policy which might lead to annexation, and they were suspicious of the attitude of the English officials ; but, though the Colonial Secretary was in no favour, they had complete confidence in

<sup>\*</sup> As to this we have the express testimony of Lord Milner, in his despatch of August 23, 1897. And at the end of 1898 the Cape Parliament, led by a "Bond" Ministry, voted £30,000 per annum to the support of the British Navy—a thing done by no other colony. See Mr. Goschen's acknowledgment in his speech of May 18, 1899, that "the Afrikaners were in power" at the time. And see the speech of Sir David Tennant on July 24, 1899.

the noble character of the Queen and in the honour of the English Ministry as a whole.

The situation of the English Ministers was a difficult one. It was believed, and honestly believed, that the Transvaal was too weak to resist pressure continuously and firmly applied; and Mr. Chamberlain determined that, though it would be injudicious and ungracious<sup>1</sup> at such a moment to insist on a reorganisation of Transvaal methods, he would lose no opportunity of pressing reforms on the Boers. Lord Rosmead retired in 1896, and with the approval of both political parties in England, the Colonial Secretary appointed Lord Milner to be Governor-General of Cape Colony and High Commissioner of South Africa.<sup>2</sup>

It is not known, and perhaps it never will be known, what instructions were given to the new Governor-General. He was probably instructed to acquaint himself with the salient facts of the situation, to find out how strong were the feelings of the Loyalists, and how far the English Government could safely go on a path of coercion. He was probably told that it was time now for the English Government to cease from ineffectual criticism and to take its stand on its rights under the Convention and as the paramount power in South Africa.

In the Transvaal the storm had apparently subsided. The failure of the Johannesburg conspiracy and the punishment inflicted on the ringleaders pre-

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Mr. Chamberlain cabled to Sir H. Robinson (Lord Rosmead) on January 7, 1896, that the Ministry were considering the advisability of sending considerable forces to South Africa.

vented for some time any further extension of the capitalist agitation. But fierce fires were burning under the quiet surface. The financiers who controlled the gold mines of the Rand were not inclined to overlook any means which might make their industry more profitable. Armed conspiracy had proved a dangerous method, and they now turned to two other courses, which were in the end fatal to peace. They determined to secure the support of the South African Press and with it of the English Press, and to obtain the sympathy and influence of the new Governor-General of Cape Colony, and, through him, of the English Ministry.

The financial leaders of Johannesburg were men not only of considerable business capacity: they were absolutely unscrupulous. They were determined to gain their ends by any means within their power, and, though it would be ungenerous to accuse them of indifference to the loss of thousands of human lives, it is certainly true to say that the risk of a terrible war did not affect their calculations. Most of them were cosmopolitan financiers, and, being men of no country, it was natural that they should regard with little compunction the risk of a war which might involve the ruin of the whole of South Africa, and might plunge England into a struggle, the end of which no one could foresee.

The control of the South African Press gave the capitalists an enormous advantage. It was the policy of Mr. Rhodes and the Rand leaders to buy up the established newspapers in Cape Colony, Natal, and the Transvaal, or to found others, in order that their political views might be promul-

gated.<sup>1</sup> Editors were appointed and instructed to press for reforms, especially for the removal of the present burden of taxation and for the better regulation of native labour. In order that these demands might be supported and that the public both in England and in South Africa might be informed of the enormities of the Transvaal Government, every grievance was exaggerated, and petty acts of misconduct on the part of the Boers were magnified into gross outrages on British subjects. It is not too much to say that during the nine months before the outbreak of the war the South African Press became a manufactory of outrages. No story was too absurd or too improbable to be printed with an appropriate commentary; and passions were excited to a dangerous point.

It is also to be noticed that the editors of the newspapers owned by the capitalists were in many cases the South African correspondents of the great London newspapers. Each outrage, therefore, served a double purpose. It inflamed public opinion in South Africa, and it was telegraphed over, with indignant protests, by the South African editors to the English Press, where its recital prepared the minds of the public for Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy.

<sup>1</sup> Years ago, Mr. Rhodes and Messrs. Eckstein and Barnato had acquired a leading interest in the *Cape Argus*. Latterly the *Argus* Company owned the *Johannesburg Star*, the *Buluwayo Chronicle*, the *Rhodesia Herald*, and the *African Review*; while Mr. Rutherford Harris, of the Chartered Company, acquired half the shares of the *Cape Times*, the chief South African journal. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, of Kimberley, was finally bought by the same capitalistic group.

The next development of the situation was the successful attempt of the mining leaders to secure the adhesion of the Imperial officials in Cape Colony. In many cases such support had been long secured. There is probably no country in the world in which "influence" plays so powerful a part as South Africa. The natural instinct of loyalty and nationality, the resentful memory, still bitter, of the "surrender" of 1881, and the social power which can be exerted by rich men who will allow no obstacle to frustrate their ambitions, were sufficient to predispose the English officials in favour of the demands of the capitalists. The latter were able to employ all the arguments of patriotism to support the claims of finance. They painted in strong colours the intolerable grievances of the Outlanders, the growing contempt of the Boers, the dangerous unrest of the Transvaal, which would certainly bring in its train a corresponding disquietude in the surrounding colonies. Their editors pictured an England of waning prestige, flouted by a Dutch Republic of 100,000 souls, and exposed to the jeers of a scornful world.

The negotiations which had been passing between Mr. Chamberlain and the Boer Government since the Jameson Raid had therefore little practical result. Suspicion and misunderstanding were rife on both sides. In 1897 the Colonial Secretary made a false step which had the most fatal results. In answer to a despatch from the Transvaal Government, offering to submit the various points at issue to arbitration, he claimed that it was impossible that a Suzerain Power should submit to arbitration matters at issue

between herself and her vassal.<sup>1</sup> To those who remember the negotiations<sup>2</sup> which preceded the annulment of the Convention of 1881 in favour of the Convention of 1884, the general claim of Suzerainty must appear preposterous, and it is difficult to understand by what arguments Mr. Chamberlain could justify the assertion of such a claim. Nothing can be clearer than that Lord Derby cancelled the preamble of 1881 in which the statement of Suzerainty occurred. The expression in the last paragraph was crossed through by his pen, and the whole preamble was definitely omitted. For Mr. Chamberlain to reclaim Suzerainty in the face of such evidence of its withdrawal was to convict himself either of ignorance or of insincerity. It was, as Sir Edward Clarke declared, a claim "made in defiance of fact, and a breach of national faith."<sup>3</sup>

Driven from this position, Mr. Chamberlain claimed that Suzerainty was, though not mentioned in the Convention of 1884, carried over from the Convention of 1881 into the second Convention. Such a claim can be justified only by a quibble which to the ordinary mind seems not only foolish but dishonest. Even if the claim of Suzerainty could be sustained, it is quite clear that such Suzerainty related only to the power of the Republic to make treaties with foreign nations, and that its power is limited by the fourth article of the second Convention. Even if the word "Suzerainty" had occurred in the preamble of the second Convention (and as a

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book C. 8,721, No. 7, October, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 50, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Speech of October 19, 1899.

matter of fact it was carefully eliminated by Lord Derby), its use would have afforded no justification for any interference with the internal politics and arrangements of the Transvaal, and the British Government in several despatches expressed their opinion that it possessed no such right.<sup>1</sup>

The Colonial Secretary, finding that the assertion of this claim had produced a most unfortunate effect, and finding also that it was impossible to sustain it in international law, did not press it. But the effect remained, and it was to the Boers another proof of the intention of the English Ministry to interfere with their Government and to undermine their independence.

For some time the public heard little of the new Governor-General, and it was hoped that the grievances of the Outlanders and the suspicions of the Boers were being allayed by mutual consideration. Lord Milner, to whom the friends of peace looked with eager hopes, returned to England in 1898, and his interviews with Mr. Chamberlain evidently resulted in instructions from the British Government to take strong measures and to insist with firmness and, if necessary, with menace, on the removal of grievances and the necessity of reform. When Lord Milner went back to South Africa it was easy to see that his new instructions were likely to be carried out to the letter. He seemed like a man determined to

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Chamberlain's express statements in his speeches of February 13 and April 12, 1896. Even under the first Convention Lord Kimberley declared that "entire freedom of action will be accorded to the Transvaal Government" apart from the rights "expressly reserved to the Suzerain power." See also pp. 78, 79 note.



provoke a quarrel. His attitude to the Dutch in Cape Colony became critical and even unfriendly.<sup>1</sup> Soon he threw himself, without reserve, into the arms of the Loyalist party. He listened to their advice, and in his despatches quoted their journals as oracles of colonial wisdom. He eagerly snatched at the tittle-tattle of officials and Loyalists, and embodied their gossip in his letters to the Colonial Office. Lord Milner's "diplomatic" correspondence with the Transvaal Ministry was becoming more embittered, and in the beginning of 1899 the situation was evidently one of tension and growing danger. On the one hand, the Cape Dutch resented the partisan attitude of the Governor-General, while the Transvaal Boers held firmly to the belief that he was, in conjunction with the capitalist conspirators of Johannesburg, preparing new methods of sapping the independence of the Transvaal. On the other hand, the English in Johannesburg were humiliated by the failure of the Jameson Raid, and irritated by the non-removal of their grievances; while the Loyalists in Cape Colony and Natal, moved by sympathy with fellow-Englishmen, suspicious of Dutch ambitions, and maddened by the ferocious incitements of the capitalist newspapers, were urging Lord Milner to make fresh and stronger demands. They assured him and the English Ministry that the Boers had become lazy and effete, that their

<sup>1</sup> Compare the letter of the Cape Town correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, published July 27, 1899, and the statement by Mr. James Molteno, M.L.A., as to Lord Milner's avowed determination to "break the dominion of Afrikanerdom." These words the Governor has officially repudiated, but they express his clear and declared policy. And see note p. 98.

military system was antiquated and useless, that their older men had forgotten and their younger men did not know how to handle the rifle. The Boers, they repeated, would yield to pressure, and certainly to a display of force. They were cowards and corrupt, and at the firm touch of Mr. Chamberlain's hand the whole rotten edifice of Transvaal misgovernment would fall to the ground.

At the beginning of 1899 Lord Milner had openly undertaken the championship of the Outlanders, and in March a petition was presented to the Queen, through him, signed by over 21,000 British residents, reciting their grievances and praying Her Majesty to intervene for their removal. A counter-petition, signed by as many Outlanders, expressing themselves satisfied with their position, was presented to the Transvaal Government. Probably a large number of signatures were obtained on either side by bribery, and it would be unwise to attach decisive importance to either petition.

It is undeniable that many of the grievances were vexatious, and that a wise government would have removed them. But the Transvaal Government was not a wise one. It was obstinate, narrow, and to a certain extent corrupt. The municipal administration of Johannesburg was inefficient, and there were numerous petty burdens which were both irritating and unnecessary. As a matter of fact, the majority of the Outlanders did not desire the franchise, *per se*; and a large number would not have taken it.<sup>1</sup> They asked for it in order that they might, by pressure in the Volksraad, be able to

<sup>1</sup> See note on p. 55.

remove some of the minor grievances which weighed upon them in their daily life. Those of the Outlanders who cared nothing for the franchise and only wanted to make money under an efficient administration were driven to agitate for a franchise which they despised. The chief grievances of the Outlanders were therefore such as might have been removed by any clear-sighted Government with business capacity. It was absurd for the President to say that the Outlanders need not come unless they liked, or that they knew what to expect when they did come. He was trying to make the best of two worlds, to get all that he could out of the Outlanders and to refuse them the privileges which most civilised States would have granted them. He was unwilling to learn the lessons of history, and to recognise the fact that misgovernment is generally more fatal to the governor than to the governed.

On the other hand, those who will take the trouble to put themselves in President Kruger's place will admit that he might reasonably fear trouble from the sudden admission to the franchise of a large number of Outlanders, many of whom had openly avowed their hope that the British flag would again fly over Pretoria. The situation, in short, was made the worst of on both sides, the Outlanders showing no consideration for the difficulties of a small State confronted by a perplexing problem, and the Boer Government failing to realise the danger of delay in solving that problem. It is impossible to acquit President Kruger of a very considerable share in the responsibility for the events which preceded and followed the

Conference and for the hostilities which ensued. But if we are to apportion the responsibility, it is difficult not to assign the greater weight of it to the English negotiators, or to deny that Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy was either ignorant or insincere. He had a good case, but he preferred to spoil it by over-statement, by a want of proportion, and by an apparently wilful ignorance.

That the general administration of the South African Republic was faulty and below the standard of some European countries is true. But it was a little State, and it had been very poor. The administration of justice was good, and the educational system was advancing swiftly. The Transvaal Government was able to point out to Mr. Chamberlain that though the gold industry was heavily taxed, at all events the burden of taxation was much lighter in the Transvaal than in the territories of the Chartered Company, where the mines were liable to be taxed by a royalty of 50 per cent., or even in England, where the small amount of gold produced in Wales some years ago was taxed by a royalty of 25 per cent. The taxation in the Transvaal was not more than 5 per cent. on *admitted profits*, or about  $\frac{1}{70}$ th of the total value of the annual output. In like manner, when Mr. Chamberlain complained of the excessive cost of the necessities of life, the Transvaal Secretary met his statement by the crushing rejoinder that whereas in the Transvaal the duties on bread stuffs were only about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the duties imposed in Cape Colony were at least 30 per cent. He also pointed out that the charges of the Netherlands Railway and the heavy price of dynamite had been considerably reduced.

On May 5th, 1899, Lord Milner sent to Mr. Chamberlain a long and sensational cablegram, in which he set forth the grievances of the Outlanders, the necessity of a reform in the Transvaal franchise, and the intolerable position of Englishmen, who were treated as "helots." He demanded from the Queen's Government "a striking proof" of their paramount power in South Africa.

On May 10th Mr. Chamberlain, in the course of a despatch to Lord Milner, laid before the Transvaal Government his opinion of the political situation and called for a removal of the grievances of which the Outlanders complained. He suggested that a meeting should be arranged between President Kruger and the High Commissioner in order that the situation might be discussed "in a conciliatory spirit." The invitation was accepted by the President, and a conference was held at Bloemfontein on May 31st.

The legal position of the British Government was a somewhat difficult one. In the first place, the Convention of 1884 entitled them to complain if any articles of that Convention had been broken to the prejudice of their subjects, and they had the right to remedy such contravention by force. But it is clear that most of the grievances of which the Outlanders complained did not come under the scope of any of the articles of that Convention. They were vexatious, and it is possible that the burdens laid on the mining industry were too heavy. Life<sup>\*</sup> and property, however, were

\* The importance of the Edgar case has been ludicrously exaggerated. The facts are simple. Edgar, an English Outlander, had quarrelled with another English Outlander, named Foster, and had struck him blows so severe that he

practically as safe in Johannesburg as in London ; and it was somewhat ludicrous that capitalists who were amassing millions out of gold mines, and were living in Corinthian luxury at Johannesburg, that traders and miners who were making money and earning wages which enabled them to live in comfort, should complain of the intolerable burdens which a corrupt Government imposed upon them.<sup>1</sup>

died. Edgar was pursued into his house by the police, and attacking them with a life-preserver, was by one of them, named Jones, *also an Englishman*, in self-defence, shot. It was an unfortunate incident, but to call it murder is foolish. Finally, the Public Prosecutor of Johannesburg, *also of English blood, and legally trained in London*, prosecuted Jones for manslaughter. The jury acquitted him, as probably any jury in the world would. See the details as officially given in Blue Book Cd. 43, January, 1900, p. 79, and the judge's notes, given in C. 9345, pp. 148-154.

<sup>1</sup> In a pamphlet published in 1894, Mr. W. Y. Campbell, F.G.S., the Vice-President of the Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines, made the following statement regarding the political and legal status of the Uitlanders :

"Emigrants to the wide, unreclaimed expanses of mineral, industrial, and agricultural wealth in the Transvaal are sometimes deterred by the fear of political troubles. No such fear need exist. The Boer is of like race and temperament with ourselves, slow to act and strong for fair play ; and, so long as the new population acts squarely by the Boer pioneers, nothing but united effort and united government need be looked for. New-comers are not given a vote the moment they put foot in the country ; but when they settle down, prepared to make the country their home, the vote will not be wanting. An English emigrant going to the Transvaal will find himself as safe as in England, so far as the liberty of the subject goes, the difference, if any, being in favour of the Transvaal. The law for Boer pioneer and English emigrant is the same ; there is no distinction of persons. Land, mining, trading, craftsmanship, and all the walks of life are as free as air to those who ask to earn their living and a competence."

The only title which England possessed was the right which any nation possesses of protesting against a state of unrest at its very gates. If political or social agitation were to assume an acute form on the French frontier of Germany, and were to threaten similar unrest in a German province, the German Government would be within its rights in protesting against the continuance of such a state of affairs. It would earnestly counsel the French Government to take measures, not only for its own safety, but for the safety of its neighbours; and if the French Government, through apathy or impotence, were to allow a continuance of anarchy, the German Ministers would be entitled to take such measures for self-defence as seemed to them necessary.

In the same way, the English Government were entitled to protest against a state of affairs in the Transvaal which was productive of unrest, and which threatened to produce an agitation dangerous not only to the interests of the South African Republic, but to peace and good feeling in the adjoining English territories. How far the English Government were justified in following up their protests by military action, whether their vague rights as the paramount power entitled them to make war upon the Transvaal if their protests were unheeded, is a question which probably most men will answer in accordance with their political or racial sympathies. It was, however, pre-eminently a question of prudence, and it was absolutely necessary for the British Government, in making such protests and following them up by energetic action, to remember that it was a great Power dealing with a small

Power, and that this small Power had been recently and unjustly attacked by English soldiers and officials. Above all, England had to remember that the great attraction of the Transvaal was its gold, and that any attack made by the Empire on the Boers would be at once and naturally interpreted by every foreign nation as a move for the possession of gold-mines rather than for the redress of grievances. It was her manifest duty and interest to see that she did not confirm the suspicions of her malicious rivals. There was, too, it must be confessed, some lack of humour in Mr. Chamberlain's demand. We who, before the great Reform Bill, had taxed our own citizens of Manchester and Birmingham without giving them representation, were demanding of the Transvaal Government at the point of the sword the extension of its franchise to a cosmopolitan band of adventurers. British Columbia has drawn to it a sudden influx of American miners. Would the American Government be justified in our eyes if they demanded for them with threats the franchise of the Canadian Dominion?

One thing is certain: England had no right, either by the Convention of 1884 or by any claim of paramountcy, to insist on a reform of the Transvaal franchise.\* She therefore took up a position

\* The Convention of 1884 is absolutely clear on this point. Lord Derby, who negotiated it, assured the Boers when he signed it, "Your Government will be left free to govern the country without interference." He reported to the Acting High Commissioner at the Cape that the Convention granted "the same complete internal independence in the Transvaal as in the Free State." Mr. W. H. Smith, when leader of the Government in the House of Commons,



which it was extremely difficult to sustain, for if a demand for the reform of the franchise could be urged by England only as friendly counsel, it is clear that she could not morally or legally enforce her counsel by a threat of war or by war itself.

In spite of these obvious considerations, and declared on February 25, 1890, in the most positive fashion :—

"It is a cardinal principle of that settlement (the Convention of 1884) that the internal government and legislation of the South African Republic shall not be interfered with." (Hansard, 1890, vol. 341, p. 1168.)

Mr. Balfour on January 15th, 1896, declared that "the Transvaal is a free and independent Government as regards its internal affairs;" and Lord Salisbury sixteen days later declared explicitly that "the Boers have absolute control over their own internal affairs."

Mr. Chamberlain in a telegram dated March 26, 1896, stated in so many words: "Her Majesty's Government do not claim any rights under the Convention to prescribe the particular internal reforms which should be made in the South African Republic." See Blue Book Cd. 43, January 1900, p. 79.

Compare also these explicit statements: "We did not claim, and never have claimed, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. The rights of our action under the Convention are limited to the offering of friendly counsel, in the rejection of which, if it is not accepted, we must be quite willing to acquiesce."

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, May 8, 1896.

"A war in South Africa would be one of the most serious wars which could possibly be waged. It would be in the nature of a civil war. It would be a long war, a bitter war, and a costly war. As I have pointed out, it would leave the embers of a strife which I believe generations would hardly be long enough to extinguish. To go to war with President Kruger, to force upon him reforms in the internal affairs of his State, in which Secretaries of State, standing in this place, have repudiated all right of interference—that would be a course of action as immoral as it would have been unwise."—Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, August, 1896.

perhaps because they could not sustain some of their other important criticisms, the British Government determined to make a reform of the franchise their specific demand and the test of their paramountcy. But in pursuance of the haphazard methods which distinguished our diplomacy, no clear statement of the British demands was laid before the Boer Government, and no basis of discussion at the Conference of Bloemfontein was arranged. It was reasonable to suppose that Lord Milner and President Kruger were to negotiate concerning the various points of controversy, but Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Milner had determined that only one matter should be discussed, and that nothing less than an absolute surrender on the part of the Boers on this point should be accepted.

As we have seen, it was impossible for an alien to obtain the franchise under a residence of fourteen years, and the High Commissioner demanded at the Conference that a law should be passed, retrospective in its action, enabling the Outlanders to become full citizens after a residence of five years. President Kruger, with that genius for bargaining which has always distinguished the Dutch, offered a term of seven years. But Lord Milner refused, in language the reverse of "conciliatory," to discuss the matter further or to enter into a consideration of the other points in dispute. The Conference was abruptly closed.

The chief responsibility for the failure of this Conference must fall upon the English Government, which had laid down no basis of discussion, and had sent its envoy into the Conference with instructions to make a demand which could not be justified under the Convention, and to retire

from the Conference if that demand were not at once granted.

The Boers are by nature suspicious bargainers. They enjoy haggling over a matter which most Englishmen would settle in five minutes, and in the present instance it is only reasonable to allow that they had substantial grounds for their suspicion. The whole history of South Africa, from 1802, seen through their eyes, was one long narrative of the duplicity and oppression of the British. They recalled their conquest in 1802, the injustice they had suffered at the hands of English officials, and their long and lonely trek into the desert. They repeated to themselves countless acts of violence; how Natal, which they had conquered from the natives, had been taken from them; how their country had been annexed against the wishes of the vast majority of their nation; how the solemn guarantees of representative government had been broken by the English. Above all, they remembered the Jameson Raid of 1895, the complicity of the British officials and of a Colonial Prime Minister, and the attempt which Mr. Chamberlain had made to impose upon them the status of a vassal.

The Conference having thus failed, the situation became obviously more dangerous. Such a failure was disastrous for the cause of peace, and it made the gulf between the two parties wider than ever. But it was unhappily a source of pleasure to the agitators in Johannesburg and in Cape Colony. They had now come to the conclusion that further negotiation was futile, and that the knot could be loosened only by the sword. Every misunderstanding and check in

the negotiations was welcomed by the organs of the capitalists in South Africa and in England, while Lord Milner, inspired by his conviction that the Boers would shrink before a firm and consistent pressure, urged an unyielding policy and a display of force.

When the English Ministry found that they were involved in a war for which they could give no rational cause, they were forced to seek other grounds. They employed the Loyalist fable of a Dutch conspiracy. They asserted and they encouraged the Press to argue that a fight for supremacy in South Africa had been long "inevitable," that it was President Kruger's ambition to make of South Africa a Dutch Republic, and "to drive the English into the sea." The negotiations, they said, had all along been unreal, and the real question was whether the Dutch or the English were to have the upper hand in South Africa.

It is not necessary to discuss at great length a statement which rests on no evidence. It is true that the statement has been made again and again; and men who repeat an assertion to themselves a hundred times at length begin to believe in its authenticity. Here it is only necessary to say that a charge of such tremendous import needs to be supported by convincing evidence. Of such evidence there is no sign. Those who bring the charge, when asked for proof, make it a fresh grievance against the Dutch that they are cunning enough to conceal every trace of a universal conspiracy. Of documentary proof, or of relevant testimony, there is not a shred.

On the contrary, the evidence is on the other

side. As we have said before, up to the year 1895 the Dutch had gradually grown more ready to accept the rule and customs of the English. Mr. Rhodes, English of the English, was supported by the Afrikaner Bond. The Cape Assembly had voted a considerable sum for the Imperial navy. The narrow policy of the Transvaal rulers had alienated the sympathy of the Cape Dutch, who resented the decision of Mr. Kruger to employ officials from Holland rather than kinsmen from Cape Colony in the public service of the Transvaal. The leaders of the Dutch Afrikaner party had strongly urged upon Mr. Kruger the advisability of making concessions to the Outlanders, and it is clear that if they wished for war they were adopting the worst methods of hastening it. The President of the Free State and his advisers were also urgent in the cause of peace. It is surely no proof of a Dutch conspiracy that after the Jameson Raid the Raads of the two Republics urged upon the British Government the advisability of placing under the direct rule of Great Britain the territory of the Chartered Company.

The theory of a gigantic Boer conspiracy received a very simple test and a very ample refutation in December. After the three reverses of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso, the English troops were absolutely at the mercy of the Boers and their Dutch sympathisers. If the Dutch in the Colony had risen, the position of our armies would have been precarious in the extreme, and in a few months the Dutch could have swept the whole Colony from end to end. But with the exception of a few hundred rebels on the frontier,

and in spite of the strong sympathy which blood brings, the Dutch remained passive and peaceful.

It may be that some of the Dutch had entertained dreams of a united South African Republic, in which the Dutch element would be preponderant both in population and political influence. But there is no evidence to show that such dreams had ever inspired a considerable fraction of the race with a desire to break away from English rule, and it would be as absurd to mistake the bombast of a few vapouring Dutchmen for the sober ideals of a nation as it would be to mistake the theories and menaces of Sir Ellis Ashmead Bartlett for the settled policy of the majority of Englishmen.

The Boers themselves had nothing to gain from the war and everything to lose. They disliked war, as they disliked everything that took them from the tranquil life of their farms. It was only the overmastering belief that England had designs upon their independence which induced them to take up arms in defence of their country.

The statement that the Boers had been secretly arming for many years before the Raid is disproved by numerous witnesses. Colonel Younghusband, who was in Johannesburg in December, 1895, states that the Boers had no serious armament; and Major White, who took part in the Raid, and had made secret inquiries, has given a list of the few guns possessed by the Boers in 1895. Dr. Jameson himself made a similar statement<sup>1</sup> at Kimberley

<sup>1</sup> "Apart from the rifles in the hands of the burghers, the whole armoury of the Transvaal was contained in the so-called Pretoria Fort, guarded by, he believed, three Staats Artillerie men, and its sole protection a broken-down corrugated iron fence."

in the summer of 1900, when standing for election there. A report on the military resources of the Boer Republics was compiled by the Intelligence Department of the English War Office in June, 1899, and portions of it, the authenticity of which has not been questioned, have been published. This official report states that—

“Of the enormous quantity of rifles now in possession of the South African Republic, only some 13,500 Martini-Henry rifles were in the country before the Jameson Raid. The whole of the remainder have been purchased since that date in England, France, Germany, and Belgium” (p. 27). The report also states that in January, 1896, the strength of the Staats Artillery was nine officers and one hundred men, with a reserve of fifty men, but that “immediately after the Raid the corps was increased in strength to about four hundred,” with a larger reserve.

Further proposals followed, but the despatches on both sides were awkwardly worded, and serious misunderstandings arose. Every day increased the dangers of the situation. It was clear to the wisest statesman in South Africa that war must be a fatal solution of the difficulty, however grave it had become; and the Cabinet of Cape Colony as well as the Ministry of Natal had pressed upon Lord Milner and Mr. Chamberlain the urgent necessity of a conciliatory treatment of the points at issue. But these representations had no influence. A demand for a speedy and final surrender was being urged on the Transvaal Government. The English Government did not desire war, but they were determined to enforce

their demands by war.<sup>1</sup> It is clear from the statements of Lord Wolseley in the House of Lords, on March 15, 1901, that war was regarded as likely, and a definite plan of campaign was in June, 1899, laid before the English Ministry, by which the subjugation of the two Republics was to be effected by November of that year.<sup>2</sup> The Cabinet was driven by the successive errors of the Colonial Secretary into a position from which retreat on their part became impossible without humiliation; and a violent end could be avoided only by the surrender of the Transvaal Government.

It is unnecessary to describe fully the negotiations which lasted from July to September of 1899. Early in July the Transvaal Government offered a seven years' retrospective franchise, and though this concession was clogged by vexatious restrictions, Mr. Chamberlain was inclined to accept it as an advance on former proposals and as a basis of settlement. But the Loyalists<sup>3</sup> and Lord

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Conyngham Greene's telegram of 15th August, in Blue Book C. 9521, p. 45. After describing how the State-Attorney came to see him about the franchise, he says:

"I spoke to him very seriously. I explained that I had no idea whether Her Majesty's Government would consent not to press their demand (for the joint inquiry); but that the situation was most critical, and that Her Majesty's Government who had given pledges to the Uitlanders, *would be bound to assert their demands and, if necessary, to press them by force.* I said that the only chance for the South African Republic Government was an immediate surrender to the Bloemfontein minimum."

As the Transvaal Government stated in its manifesto: "Great Britain has offered two alternatives—a Five years' franchise or War."

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, 4th Series, vol. 91, col. 11, 12.

<sup>3</sup> On July 20th the Outlander Council telegraphed to Mr. Chamberlain that it was "keenly disappointed *Times*



Milner were inflexible, and the capitalist newspapers urged the maintenance of the strong line of policy which Lord Milner had taken up at Bloemfontein. The Volksraad passed the Franchise Bill on July 23rd, but it was obscurely drafted, and the English Government, being unwilling to accept any scheme of franchise which did not contain the certainty of an enduring settlement, proposed in a despatch of July 27th that a joint inquiry should be held into the probable working of the new law. This despatch was not unconciliatory in manner, but it contained an unfortunate reference to the Conventions between England and the South African Republic which Mr. Chamberlain declared had been broken in the letter as well as in the spirit, and the implicit claim thus made that the relations of the two countries were governed not only by the Convention of 1884 but also by that of 1881 was certain to inspire in the Boer Ministers the most obstinate suspicion.

The suggestion of a joint inquiry was not pleasing to the Boer Government. They asked the British Ministers not to press their demand for an inquiry, and promised to make further and important concessions to the demands of Mr. Chamberlain. They therefore proposed in their despatch of August 19th to grant a five years' retrospective franchise, to give eight new seats in the First Volksraad to the Rand, and to allow the

announcement that seven years' franchise acceptable Imperial Government." (Blue Book C. 9415, p. 53.) On Aug. 25th the Council intimated that even five years' franchise would not be satisfactory without other conditions, one of which was "Disarmament of the Boer population, and demolition of the forts."

new burghers to vote at the election of the State President and the Commandant-General. They added that they would be prepared to consider any friendly suggestions regarding the details of the franchise law that Her Majesty's Government would wish to convey to it. These concessions were of the highest importance, and they were made subject to three conditions: "(a) That Her Majesty's Government will agree that the present intervention shall not form a precedent for future similar action, and that in the future no interference in the affairs of the Republic will take place; (b) that Her Majesty's Government will not further insist on the assertion of the suzerainty, the controversy on the subject being allowed tacitly to drop; (c) that arbitration (from which foreign element other than Orange Free State is to be excluded) will be conceded as soon as the franchise scheme has become law." The Transvaal despatch ended by the expression of an apparently sincere desire to put an end to the controversy of the two Governments and to their strained relations, and "to prevent a racial war from the effects of which South Africa may not recover for many generations, perhaps never at all."

The answer of the British Government was contained in the despatch of August 28th, 1899, and was ambiguous and ungracious. How ambiguous it was may be judged from the fact that the Boer Government interpreted it as a refusal of their offer: while the Colonial Secretary regarded it as a qualified acceptance.\*

\* Mr. CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. member harps on the word acceptance. He must remember he asked me the question what we intended. I myself should have

It showed no pleasure at the reduction of the time limit from seven years to five, but expressed rather its suspicions that the proposals might be hampered by vexatious conditions. It evaded the request of the Boer Ministry that the present intervention should not form a precedent, and contained a studied reference to the Conventions rather than to the Convention. It repeated, too, the claim of suzerainty which Mr. Chamberlain had asserted in the second paragraph of his despatch of July 13th. It agreed to discuss the form and scope of a tribunal of arbitration, but it did not concede arbitration; while its final and perhaps its most fatal clause reminded the Government of the South African Republic that there were "other matters of difference" which would have to be settled concurrently with the questions now under discussion.

thought that the Boers would have taken it as an acceptance, but I suppose it may be properly described as a qualified acceptance. We did not accept everything, but we accepted at least nine-tenths of the whole.

Sir E. CLARKE : Really this becomes more and more sad. It is dreadful to think of a country of this kind entering upon a war, a crime against civilisation, when this sort of thing has been going on. Why, in the very next sentence the right hon. gentleman says : "It is on this ground that Her Majesty's Government have been compelled to regard the last proposal of the Government of the South African Republic as unacceptable in the form in which it has been presented."

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : In the form.

Sir E. CLARKE : It is a matter of form ?

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : Yes.

(*House of Commons*, Oct. 19, 1899. *Hansard*, vol. 77, p. 311.)

In later despatches Mr. Chamberlain appears to treat his answer of Aug. 28th as a refusal.

It is almost unnecessary to say that this despatch left on the minds of the Boer Ministers a most unhappy impression. The Boers had yielded all that the British Government demanded, and they saw that their concessions were received grudgingly, that not only was the offensive and unfounded claim of suzerainty again emphasised, but that Mr. Chamberlain's despatch ended with an ominous suggestion of further demands.

Mr. Chamberlain was not content with this unfortunate document. On August 26th, he made a violent speech at Birmingham, in which he attacked Mr. Kruger with personal insult, accused him of dribbling out "reforms like water from a squeezed sponge," and told him that the sands were "running down in the glass." The prospect of a compromise was displeasing to the South African Loyalists, to the advocates of violence in England and Johannesburg and to Lord Milner. On August 31st, the High Commissioner telegraphed a demand for war in the following words: "British South Africa is prepared for extreme measures, and is ready to suffer much in order to see the vindication of British authority. It is a prolongation of the negotiations, endless and indecisive of result, that is dreaded. I fear seriously that there will be a strong reaction of feeling against the policy of Her Majesty's Government if matters drag."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Chamberlain's speech and Lord Milner's

Blue Book C. 9521, p. 51. Other reasons urged in the telegram are that business is at a standstill in Johannesburg; and that there is an "unmistakable growth of uneasiness about the present situation, and of desire to see it *terminated at any cost.*"

despatch forced the Boers to conclude that Mr. Chamberlain was set on war and that, after having forced from them one batch of concessions, he would use these as a lever for further exactions. Filled with such suspicions, the Transvaal Ministers in their despatch of September 2nd, withdrew their offer of a five years' franchise and reverted to their former proposal of a seven years' term, offering six days later to accept a joint inquiry into the working of the franchise law. On September 8th, a Cabinet Council was held in London, and it was decided to move troops from India to South Africa and to send reinforcements from England. On the same date a despatch was telegraphed to the High Commissioner in which Mr. Chamberlain stated that he could not now consent to accept a seven years' franchise, and that if the Government of the South African Republic declined to enlarge their last offer "Her Majesty's Government must reserve to themselves the right to reconsider the situation afresh." This despatch was worded with far more tact than the unfortunate despatch of August 28th, but the resentment of the Boers was now so strong that though Mr. Chamberlain made no mention of suzerainty, their suspicions were not laid to rest. Moreover, the final words of the despatch constituted a threat, and confirmed the Boer Government in its impression that further concessions were useless. In a despatch of September 16th, it therefore refused the proposals of the British despatch of September 8th. Mr. Chamberlain's reply through Lord Milner, of September 22nd, finally broke off negotiations and, expressing the regret of the British Government that the Boer Ministry refused to accept its last proposals, stated

that it seemed useless "to further pursue a discussion on the lines hitherto followed, and Her Majesty's Government are now compelled to consider the situation afresh, and to formulate their proposals for a final settlement of the issues which have been created in South Africa by the policy constantly followed for many years by the Government of the South African Republic. They will communicate to you the result of their deliberations in a later despatch."<sup>1</sup>

Thus ended the long series of controversial despatches which preceded the final rupture. It is useless now to examine minutely the comparative success of the disputants. Each side had a strong case, and each side abused it. To whichever we assign the victory we must acknowledge that it was the most barren and fatal of all victories—a victory of dialectics. The bitter and unfounded suspicions, the dread of aggressive designs or of further and latent demands which a long controversy always creates, and which neither party will lay to rest for fear of losing some trivial advantage in the game—these are the

<sup>1</sup> Two days previously, Mr. Hayes-Fisher, one of the Junior Lords of the Treasury, had said: "The Government must now send a sufficient force to the Cape to insure that *when the final ultimatum was presented*, the Boers should not be able to mistake the fact of our having enough troops there to secure the ends we were determined to achieve. Then perhaps they would listen to the voice of reason, and not enter upon an unequal contest and invite us to inflict on them a crushing defeat and take from them the country they so much cherished." Mr. Hayes-Fisher, it is noteworthy, pronounced on Sept. 20th that "the sand *had* run through the glass for Paul Kruger." (*Times*, Sept. 21st p. 4, col. 3, end.)

overpowering motives which hurry men and nations into strife. Amid the clash of angry tongues the claims of statesmanship are overlooked, and each side forgets that while it is arguing for victory, the mist of words must soon give place to the smoke of battle.

There were undoubtedly in 1899 imperial dangers against which it was necessary for us to guard; there were undoubtedly abuses in the Transvaal against which it was right for us to protest. But the dangers that existed in 1899 were as nothing to the dangers which our rash entry into strife has now created for the Empire. It is the duty of a statesman to be patient and to look to the future rather than to the present, and if Mr. Chamberlain had possessed the instinct of statesmanship he would have taken into consideration the increasing co-operation between the English and the Dutch, the growth of a progressive party in the Transvaal, the fact that Mr. Kruger was not immortal, and above all the fearful danger of a racial war. A wise statesman would have paid less attention to the conduct of a diplomatic controversy and to the winning of an argumentative victory than to the maintenance at almost any cost of peace in South Africa.

The despatch of September 22nd was in essence an ultimatum, and as such the Boer Government regarded it. In the meantime, on September 25th, the British headquarters were moved north from Ladysmith to Dundee, the English Ministers summoned Parliament for the granting of Supplies, while on October 7th the reserves were called up, an army corps mobilised, and a large number of transports were chartered to convey troops to

South Africa. The days passed, and the Boer Government could obtain no definite reply to their inquiries as to the meaning of Mr. Chamberlain's last despatch. Irritated by the concentration of a large force of English troops on the Natal border, and learning that an army corps was embodied and ready to sail, the Boers determined to take the only step which a weak nation can take against a great one threatening force. On October 9th they issued an ultimatum, couched in peremptory terms, which claimed that Her Majesty's troops should be withdrawn. Mr. Chamberlain refused to acknowledge the Boer demands, and hostilities commenced on October 11th.

The Boer ultimatum made escape from war impossible ; it was a despatch which no Government could accept. But though its terms were arrogant, it would be unfair to say that they were in their essence unreasonable. Mr. Chamberlain, in his despatch of September 22nd, had broken off negotiations and had told the Boer Ministers that he would now formulate his demands and his scheme for a final settlement of the issues. It was impossible for the Boers to mistake the significance of the English despatches and of our warlike preparations.<sup>1</sup> They could

<sup>1</sup> The Natal Ministry in August recognised that to call out *their* volunteers, as Mr. Chamberlain had asked them to do, would be regarded by the Transvaal as a declaration of war. Yet the Governor, Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson, urged the step, and even proposed in September the invasion of the Transvaal. Finally he decided, on Sept. 24th, to occupy Glencoe, while avowedly believing that the Boers, who had not yet been commandeered, would then probably occupy Laing's Nek. (See Blue Books Cd. 43, p. 44, and Cd. 44, pp. 6, 16, 20, 21, 22.)



only mean that England had determined to make peremptory demands, and to back up these demands with a large army and a declaration of war. There were, in fact, two ultimatums, the first one from Mr. Chamberlain, containing a menace that warlike measures would be shortly taken; the second from the Boers, who were determined not to await the advent of an overwhelming force. The Transvaal doubtless made a diplomatic mistake in issuing its ultimatum, but the step was one which would probably have been taken by any other State in the civilised world, similarly placed.

The Transvaal Government, remembering the attempt which had been made upon their independence, in which the Colonial Office, justly or unjustly, had been held to be an accomplice, sincerely believed that Mr. Chamberlain's diplomacy was empty and insincere, and that it was both an attempt to assert a Suzerainty which they denied, and a pretext to gain time for the preparation of an overwhelming military force.

The Boers had made concessions which were genuine and substantial. Mr. Chamberlain had rejected these concessions, and had threatened, in no ambiguous phrase, new demands. These demands he refused to disclose until an English Army Corps was ready to enforce them. Would any state wait patiently while hostile forces were gathering to crush its independence? It is clear, therefore, that war was forced upon the Transvaal Government, and the chief responsibility of the tragedy must fall upon the English Ministers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neither is the opinion of some of the schoolmen to be received, that a war cannot justly be made, but upon a pre-

There were, as is always the case, grave faults on both sides. On the one hand, the Boer Government allowed its suspicions to prevent the frank and full acceptance of the English demands which they were afterwards willing to grant. On the other hand, Mr. Chamberlain, who neither by education nor temperament is fitted to carry on a delicate diplomacy, despised the position and the resources of the Transvaal. From the beginning of 1896 it is not too much to say that the history of our diplomacy is the history of a personal struggle between Mr. Chamberlain and President Kruger. Such a struggle was certain. Both men belonged to the same type, stubborn, imperious, and suspicious. A fixed idea inspired both. Mr. Chamberlain honestly believed that the Boers would yield to pressure and threats, while the President regarded Mr. Chamberlain's violent methods as additional confirmation of his suspicions and fears. A vicious circle had been started. Every minatory speech by Mr. Chamberlain made a return to reasonable diplomacy on his part less possible, while every proposal of the Transvaal Government was regarded by him as a new attempt to confuse the issues and prolong a period of vexatious inaction. The Colonial Secretary was unable or unwilling to make his meaning clear, and he adopted an attitude, a method of argument, and an insulting form of words, which were unpalatable to a proud and

cedent injury or provocation ; for there is no question but a just fear of an imminent danger, though there be no blow given, is a lawful cause of war.

FRANCIS BACON, *Essay on Empire*,

stubborn people, and which no free Colony of ours could have borne for a day.

It is certain that even at a late period of the negotiations there was little to prevent the success of the diplomacy, and it seemed that negotiations were broken off because President Kruger would not yield all that Mr. Chamberlain demanded. Mr. Chamberlain had determined that there could be only one issue to the deadlock, and that it must take the form of a complete diplomatic submission on the part of the Boer Government. Would it be an exaggeration to say that England has been involved in a disastrous war because an English Minister attempted by threats to force an ignorant Dutchman into submission to his will?

Mr. Chamberlain allowed in the House of Commons that of the final proposals of the Boers nine-tenths were satisfactory to him, and that the other one-tenth was not worth fighting for.<sup>1</sup> His

<sup>1</sup> On October 25, 1899, the following conversation took place in the House of Commons :—

Mr. COURTNEY : My right hon. friend sent an answer intended to be an acceptance. (An HON. MEMBER : No, no !) My right hon. friend is quite equal to denying my statement if it is wrong.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : Oh, well, then, I will deny it. I did not think it worth while to interrupt my right hon. friend because he must know that I have said over and over again a "qualified acceptance," and he always omits the adjective.

Mr. COURTNEY : You said nine-tenths. Is a question as to one-tenth worth war? Tell us what the tenth is.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : I do not think it was worth war.

Mr. COURTNEY : Tell us what the one-tenth was.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN : *Why did not President Kruger give way?*

Mr. COURTNEY : Because you did not explain the de-

diplomatic methods were so inept that he was obliged to confess that, though he meant to accept the Boer proposal, he sent a reply which could be interpreted as a refusal. His despatches were wanting in frankness, and several of them contained a hint or menace of further demands which would follow when the points under immediate discussion had been gained. He thought, and he assured the Opposition, that the Transvaal would yield to pressure; and he honestly believed that the despatch of an army corps would bring the Boers to their senses. In spite of the warnings of those who knew South Africa better than he did, he refused to believe that the Transvaal would resist, and that the Free State would help her sister. He had determined to crush the Boers and sooner or later to bring them under the British flag. The farewell words of Lord Milner at Capetown on May 7, 1901, are significant of the aims of the two statesmen, and they seem to suggest that no concessions on the part of the Boers would have availed.<sup>1</sup> Of a

spatch. It was never explained to him. The whole point is, Are we to go to war on the tenth part? As to that history will judge. I am too confident, unfortunately, of what the result will be.

<sup>1</sup> Flinching from no sacrifice and turning a deaf ear to people whose endeavour was ever tending to confine and smother the one cardinal point in a mass of side issues, the British people had gone straight upon *the way on which they had set out from the first, to make an end of the business once and for all, to make South Africa one country under one flag and with one system of law and government.*

LORD MILNER at Cape Town, May 7, 1901.

Compare his telegrams of May 5 and August 31, 1899, quoted on pp. 75, 90; also his long despatch of June 14,

diplomacy, conducted in such a spirit, war was obviously an "inevitable" result.

Mr. Bryce justly points out that the British Government went into the war without having formulated a *casus belli*. They had not demanded redress of the grievances of which the Outlanders complained, and they could not make the restricted franchise a cause for war. They had not presented any demands, but had made vague menaces. They had thereby exposed their country to the malicious comment of foreign nations, and had brought on a war without any definite grounds.

The attitude of the South African and of the English Press during the negotiations had been significant. The capitalists, through their editors and the South African League and the Outlander Council of Johannesburg, added new demands to the old ones, and openly expressed their hope that the negotiations would be vain and that force would take the place of conciliation. The final failure of diplomacy was hailed with relief in England<sup>1</sup>; and, just as George III. welcomed the outbreak of hostilities in America as the close of an intolerable position, so many of the leaders of public opinion in South Africa and in England

1899, describing the Bloemfontein Conference, where he uses the words: "I was thinking more especially of the state of things which would arise *in the remote contingency of our being able to come to an amicable settlement of all, or our principal differences.*" (Blue Book C. 9404, p. 5, par. 36.) The context is to the effect that *if* things were peaceably settled now there would always be fresh troubles in future.

<sup>1</sup> "A happy escape," it was termed by one great paper.

expressed their satisfaction that the negotiations had failed, and that the sword would now have the opportunity of doing what the pen and the tongue had failed to effect. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chamberlain has more than once expressed his pride in the war, and has stated that if, as his opponents asserted, he was the author of the war, such an exploit would be "a feather in his cap." (Speech of Oct. 8, 1900 reported in *Times* of 9th.)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CAMPAIGN

**I**T is not necessary for our purpose to narrate in any detail the events of the Boer war. It falls naturally into three divisions. In the first the Boer invaders were everywhere successful, and, inflicting on us three defeats in one week, might have carried their victorious arms to the sea but for a lack of enterprise natural to a citizen force and for the heroic defence of the garrison of Ladysmith. The second is the period of our success to the occupation of Pretoria. The third, and the most painful of all, is the period of stubborn and tedious warfare which has lasted, without any considerable success on our side, from August, 1900, to the present time.

The first period of the war was a lamentable one for our armies. It would be ungenerous to criticise the strategy of Sir Redvers Buller, for it was thrust on him by circumstances, and was not his free choice, and the force which was entrusted to him was utterly inadequate to its task. The expectation held out to the public by a thoughtless Press and shared by a thoughtless Government, that General Buller's army corps would be able to

advance through the Republics, to sweep aside any resistance that the Boers might offer, to occupy Pretoria and Bloemfontein, and after a few easy successes to dictate terms of peace, is, in the light of our later experience, seen to be ludicrous, and can only be compared with the parallel hope of Mr. Rhodes in 1895, that Dr. Jameson, with his five hundred troopers, would overthrow the Republic.

The mistakes which General Buller made were due to political misdirection and to political necessity rather than to any miscalculation on his own part. The beginning of the mischief in Natal was the Government's promise to defend the Colony with the whole force of the Empire. This promise held Sir George White to the defence of Dundee, and this in its turn made the siege of Ladysmith inevitable. If the cry of Ladysmith could have been resisted—and it could not—the promise would still have compelled General Buller in honour to go to Natal. The knots in the fatal entanglement of Ladysmith were thus tied by the politicians, not by the soldiers. It was the same in Kimberley. Mr. Cecil Rhodes was besieged in the town, quarrelling with the military officers in command. Needs must be, therefore, that a body of English troops should at once set out to its relief. The disaster of Magersfontein was the result. The Ministry had rushed into war without making adequate preparations for the defence of its own frontier in Cape Colony, and Kimberley and Ladysmith between them had deprived Sir William Gatacre of his due share of the army corps. He attempted, with inadequate forces, to drive back the Boer invaders. The tragedy of Stormberg was the result.



The second period of the war began in January, 1900, when at last the Ministers became alive to the danger of the situation. Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, with an enormous force, which ultimately increased our army to 250,000 men, were sent out to retrieve the errors of our politicians rather than the mistakes of our generals. Then followed a series of successes. Kimberley and Ladysmith were relieved, Cronje's force surrendered, and, by a rapid movement, Lord Roberts was able to occupy Bloemfontein without much serious resistance.

The Government had now its golden opportunity. We had driven the Boers from our territories, we had avenged the insult of their ultimatum, one of their capitals was in our hands and the other would soon be taken. Their army was in flight, and their unprogressive government at our mercy.

Our Ministry went to war either to relieve the grievances of the Outlanders or to secure for them the rights of the franchise, or to assert British supremacy in South Africa. We made war on a Government, not on a Nation.<sup>1</sup> We did not go to war to annex the two Republics or to take from them their gold mines. But whatever was the motive of the Ministers, there was, after the fall of Bloemfontein, no reason to doubt that they had secured each and all of the possible objects of the war. It was therefore the duty of the conqueror to

<sup>1</sup> Lord Roberts's proclamation on entering the Orange Free State contains the words: "The British Government believes that this act of aggression [by the O.F.S.] was not committed with the general approval and free will of a people with whom it has lived in complete amity for so many years."

impose certain terms on the conquered, and it was in accordance with the dictates both of reason and humanity that these terms should be possible ones.

The two Boer Presidents saw, after the capture of Cronje, that Bloemfontein would fall and Ladysmith would be relieved. They saw that it was no longer possible for the Boers to contend on equal terms with Great Britain. On March 5th, in a joint telegram to Lord Salisbury, they sued for peace, and proposed that hostilities should be suspended. It would have been right and reasonable of the English Ministry to have answered this appeal by laying down certain terms which, though they might have been severe, would have preserved to the Boers their national life, their laws and customs and representative institutions. They might have demanded that the armaments which the Boers had accumulated during the last few years should be given up, that the grievances of the Outlanders should be at once and wholly abolished, and that an indemnity should be paid; nor would any reasonable man have opposed the suggestion that the two Republics should pass as protected States under the supremacy of the British flag.

When a State is at war with another State, it is not usual for the conqueror, even when his enemy has declared war upon him, to annex the whole of his territories and to declare that in the future his enemy shall cease to exist as a nation. There is, except the case of Poland, no example in modern history, of the policy which we have to our sorrow pursued. But the English Ministers, puffed up by success and urged forward by the passionate outcry of their ignorant advisers in South Africa and at home, refused to listen to the Boer appeal.

Lord Salisbury told the Presidents that there could be no discussion of terms, that the two Republics must make an unconditional submission and must accept whatever fate the English Ministry accorded them. He added further that no result would be satisfactory to England which left to the Boers a shred of independence.

The inevitable result followed. The Boers were made desperate by Lord Salisbury's threats. They saw that the imperfections of their Government were no longer the object of attack. They saw that they were fighting, not against defeat by an ordinary foe, not against disarmament; not against the demands of the mine-owners; they were fighting for their national existence. The English Ministers and English public must have been blind not only to the dictates of common sense, but also to the traditions of their own glorious history, if they did not understand that their enemy would fight desperately and would be right in fighting to the death for the noblest of all causes.

But when passion obscures the vision, it is useless to ask men to see facts as they are. The evil genius which had inspired our Government from the beginning still tracked its footsteps, and the opportunity was lost. From the infatuated policy of the English Ministers, difficulties and disasters followed thick and fast. The enemy, who had before this shown signs of wavering, at once grew firm and unanimous in their determination. Shortly after the rejection of the Presidents' overtures, Sanna's Post made De Wet famous. Already at Bloemfontein the difficulties of the army were so great that nearly two months went by—months of "regrettable incidents"—before an advance to Pretoria was

the oath of neutrality as unpatriotic and as taken under compulsion, and, therefore, as void; and since the English troops were not able to occupy the country effectively, it became a regular occurrence for an English force to leave a town on one day and for a Boer commando on the next day to appear and force the unfortunate burghers to join it. The weakness of our position deprived us of the power to protect those burghers on whom we had forced the oath of neutrality. The whole fabric of our military power in South Africa, hurriedly raised, as we have seen, under complete political misapprehension, began to crumble at its base. The occupation of Pretoria marked the climax of our power: from that date it began to ebb and wane.

The spectacle of our unfulfilled hopes and prophecies drove us to the absurd conclusion that the resistance of the Boers was confined to the scum of the population or to foreign mercenaries. Our pride refused to allow that the entire population of the Republics was united against our wish to make them British citizens. We had deceived ourselves; but anxious to find a scapegoat, we declared that we had been deceived. And now began the cry for personal chastisement of the Boers. At first directed only against those Boers who had—in the majority of cases, as Lord Roberts has admitted, unwillingly—violated their oaths of neutrality, our indignation gradually became more and more collective, until it threatened to visit all Boers without distinction.

Bewildered and embarrassed, Lord Roberts began to wage war by proclamations. It was perhaps the most fatal mistake of all, and again it

was political, not military, in its origin. Many in number and inconsistent in policy, the proclamations proceeded from clemency to sternness and from sternness to clemency. The earlier ones were in accord with the rules of civilised warfare; but the later ones breathed a spirit of anger and revenge utterly opposed to the views which the English delegates had put forth at the Hague Conference of 1899. Sir John Ardagh, at that Conference, had brought in a motion, asserting that it is the right of the "population of an invaded country to fulfil its duty of opposing the invaders by all lawful means by the most patriotic resistance." Nothing can be clearer than this statement, which represented the traditional policy of a free England, ever ready in its sympathy with the cause of small nations. But in a proclamation dated from Johannesburg on July 1, 1900, Lord Roberts warns all the inhabitants of the Orange River Colony who should be found in arms fourteen days after the date of the proclamation that they would be liable to be dealt with as rebels and to suffer in person and property accordingly. Lord Roberts and the Ministers probably argued that, the Orange Free State having been annexed to the Crown of England, every citizen still opposing the English army became, by the mere issue of a proclamation, a rebel and a traitor. It is not necessary to comment further on this proclamation, because on September 1st the Ministers and Lord Roberts acknowledged its illegality and repealed it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Roberts unsuccessfully pursued a similar policy of devastation and issued a similar proclamation against the Afghans in 1879. His action was severely criticised in a petition signed by various eminent men, among whom were Mr. J. Chamberlain and the then Archbishop of Canterbury.

Other proclamations described the penalties to which the Boers rendered themselves liable by the continuance of the struggle for independence. It became the custom first of all to burn farms from which a treacherous attack was made upon our troops, then to burn all farms within a radius of ten miles from any point on the railway at which an attack was made by the enemy, then to confiscate or burn anything which was the property of any Boer fighting for his country.<sup>1</sup> In most cases there is no pretence that there was treachery, or ammunition concealed, or food given. The simple order was given to "clear" the country.

These measures were harsh and inconsistent with the traditions of the British army, and nothing has shown more clearly the want of intelligence on the part of our Ministers and civil and military advisers than this policy of devastation.<sup>2</sup> If

<sup>1</sup> It was stated by Ministers that the burning of farms was in every case the punishment of treachery. But this excuse has been now abandoned. According to a Parliamentary Paper, the number of farms and houses burnt in the Republics, from June, 1900, to January, 1901, was 630. The return is obviously incomplete, and the number must be at least treble. Of this number 189 were burnt in October, and 226 in November, when the war was "over." A large number of the farms were burnt because the owners were on commando, *i.e.*, fighting for their country, and very few on the ground of treachery. Thus the express assurance from Lord Kitchener (communicated by Mr. Chamberlain to the House of Commons on December 7, 1900) that no farms had been burnt save for breach of the laws of war, is now falsified even by the imperfect return compiled under Lord Kitchener's auspices. For a typical description of devastation see Appendix E.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Roberts's policy is condemned by himself. At the outset we find him issuing a stringent proclamation against

anything has been proved in history, it is that such a policy cannot be followed by a free nation fighting another free nation. It might be pursued by Russia against Central Asian barbarians; but we are not Russians, and England has noble and generous traditions. We could not even excuse ourselves by the example of our foes. The Boers have, with a few exceptions, adhered to the rules of civilised warfare; and, though Botha and De Wet have more than once threatened reprisals, it must be placed to their eternal honour that they have as yet refrained from the barbarous measures which we to our shame have deliberately pursued. The same blind fury which animated Lord North's Ministry and his generals in 1777 has animated our Ministry during this unhappy war. We have had no fixed policy, but, like a foolish mother, we turned from blandishment to menace, and from stripes to caresses. We forget that which in our reason we should readily allow: that nothing makes men more irreconcilable than to see their houses burnt, their private property looted or confiscated, their women and children

all "wanton destruction or damage of public or private property, such destruction or damage not being justified by the usages and customs of civilised warfare." Again: "It is the desire of Her Majesty's Government, and it is my intention to conduct this war with as little injury as possible to peaceful inhabitants, and to private property." Compare also his protest against the Boers in Natal with which his letter of February, 1900, closes: "It is barbarous to attempt to force men to take sides against their own Sovereign and country by threats of spoliation and expulsion. Men, women, and children have had to leave their homes owing to such compulsion, and many of those who were formerly in comfortable circumstances are now being maintained by charity."

imprisoned and dying.<sup>1</sup> The devastation was unwise on other grounds. Our great army found itself tied to the railway, unable to move quickly through a district where many of the houses had been burnt, much of the food destroyed, and the cattle driven away. Our columns could not move without large convoys and their mobility was lost. As our difficulties increased, it became clear to our advisers that their severe policy was having an effect contrary to their hopes, and by subsequent proclamations in November, 1900, the Commander-in-Chief promised that for the future promiscuous farm-burning should be stopped, while the regulation of compelling residents to travel in military trains had been long before repealed.

It would be unjust and untrue to charge against the honour of the army the policy and the scenes of desolation which have been one of the most unfortunate features of this campaign.<sup>2</sup> The policy

<sup>1</sup> " . . . the inexpressible wrong, the unutterable shame,  
That turns the coward's heart to steel, and sluggard's  
blood to flame."

<sup>2</sup> The policy of devastation has been justified by the repetition of the proverb "War is war"—a saying which is either a superfluous truism or an excuse which would justify the commission of the most atrocious barbarities. It is contrary not only to the rules of the Hague Convention of 1899, but would have met with the severest censure from the great masters of war. Wellington has said that such warfare is barbarous and impolitic. Sir Charles Napier, in an official memorandum in December, 1849, speaks in no hesitating words, and his views were strongly held by the commander-in-chief in India, Lord Clyde: "It is with surprise and regret that I have seen that villages have been destroyed by the troops. I desire to know why a proceeding at variance with humanity, and contrary to the usages of civilised warfare, came to be



had a political rather than a military inspiration. It was unutterably odious to thousands of our soldiers, and it increased their disgust with a campaign which was now being carried on by methods contrary to the high-spirited traditions of the British army. Even after the horrors of the Indian Mutiny our soldiers spared the farms and villages of the enemy, and the houses and supplies which a hasty and angry general might have destroyed, saved many of our columns from distress. We know that our officers and soldiers are men of generous instincts and chivalrous demeanour. This war has left us few illusions, but, at all events, let us retain the faith that our soldiers are just and merciful, that they do not of their own initiative make war on women and children, and that it is no part of a British soldier's duty or pleasure to lay desolate the houses and towns of the enemy whom he cannot capture. We must seek the origin of this ruthless policy in the civilian mind. The same error which appears to have debauched the minds

adopted. I disapprove of such cruelties, so unmilitary, and so injurious to the discipline and honour of the army." Napoleon's view is expressed in the following instruction to his generals in Italy and Spain: "Advise General Cæsar Berthier to treat the inhabitants well, to make himself loved by them, to leave them their constitution for the present, and to be as little as possible a burden to them."

What would Shakespeare have said to the plea of our Ministers that "War is war"? Henry V. will tell us: "We give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner." ("King Henry V.," Act III., Scene 6.)

of so many respectable citizens both in South Africa and in England, and which assured us that the Boers were cowards who would yield and bandits and murderers who must be shot like vermin, doubtless persuaded our Government that, as vermin could not be killed until their nests were destroyed, so we should never conquer the Boers until we laid low their habitations, made their country a desert, and carried their women and children into captivity. Let us then hold the army innocent.<sup>1</sup>

It was stated on some authority, that before the severe proclamations of Lord Roberts we had at least one-third of the Free State burghers on our side and willing to submit. Lord Roberts's change of policy immediately turned the majority of these men into bitter opponents. Every day increased our difficulties and hardened the determination of our enemy. Every act of harshness was carried, coloured and monstrosly exaggerated, to our Dutch subjects in Cape Colony. The two Republics were become deserts with blackened farms and ruined towns, and in Cape Colony the old loyalty towards the English Crown was fast dying out and was being replaced by a sullen hatred which might burst at any moment into a dangerous flame. But the path of folly ever leads downward, and, as the dangers and the difficulties

<sup>1</sup> It is the policy of the Government (expressed by Lord Hugh Cecil in a letter to the *Times* of June 24, 1901) to throw the blame for the barbarous methods of this war on our generals and soldiers in the field. Such an attitude is both unconstitutional and cowardly. The Ministry is responsible to Parliament and the public for the acts of its executive departments; and to shelter itself behind our brave and sorely-tried army is an unworthy trick.

grow, the unfortunate traveller finds that to step back is impossible and that to grope blindly in the darkness is his only course.

The war on private property failed, as the policy of a rapid advance on the enemy's capitals had failed. The position of our army was becoming dangerous, and, though Lord Roberts after a long wait at Pretoria threw out columns and seized the Delagoa railway, he was unable to advance any substantial distance north of the railway line. More than half the Transvaal remained untraversed by our troops, and the main Boer army, with its Commander-in-Chief and the Ministers of the late Republic, were left free to move about at their will.

At length the Government and Lord Roberts began to discover that they had completely misunderstood both the character of the Boers and the difficulties of their own position. The English public, too, grew sensitive about the policy of devastation in which our premature advance and annexation had involved us; and Lord Kitchener, who in the beginning of December, 1900, succeeded Lord Roberts, was instructed to issue a proclamation by which an amnesty was offered to all who undertook to surrender. It was promised that there should be no more indiscriminate burning of farms—for indiscriminate it had become, thanks not so much to the deliberate policy of Lord Roberts as to the series of irreconcilable proclamations which confused a dozen policies; and it was further recognised that we had no right to exact an oath of neutrality and penalties for its violation unless we offered those who took it adequate protection. As it was im-

possible to give this protection to burghers in the country, they were deported to the new camps<sup>1</sup> of "concentration" which had been started along the lines of communication.

Into these camps were gathered the Boer women and children from the "cleared" or devastated country, most of whom were carried thither and detained against their will. We were following the ominous precedent of General Weyler in Cuba, with this distinction, that we undertook the responsibility of feeding the refugees. The advantage of this system was that it enabled us to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, and to devastate the country outside the refugee camps with a conscience superficially clearer. But the strain on the railways was greatly increased by the new responsibility.

Another serious and obvious disadvantage was that, with all the good will in the world, it was difficult to feed and care for the numerous occupants of these camps. Hosts of delicate women and children were living under insanitary conditions and on bad or insufficient food,<sup>2</sup> and our authorities added to the danger by lowering this poor standard of comfort and placing on

<sup>1</sup> In reality these are prison camps. Mr. Brodrick, who once asserted that the women and children were free to come and go, has now confessed that they are prisoners.

"One notable feature about these cases is that in all, except one, a case of absolute destitution, the women express an emphatic and unconditional desire to leave the camps. 'Better anywhere than here,' is the general verdict."—*From Miss Hobhouse's report.*

<sup>2</sup> See Miss Emily Hobhouse's Report of a visit to these camps (Friars Printing Association, price 1d.). For a description of the Camps see Appendices C and D. See also the official report of the Medical Officer, Appendix B.

reduced rations the women and children of the burghers who were still in the field against us.<sup>1</sup> It was hoped that the fighting Boers, hearing that their wives and children were being half-starved, would hasten to surrender. But the hope was vain, and this cowardly and barbarous measure proved futile.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. JOHN ELLIS, on Feb. 26, 1901, asked Mr. Brodrick whether the women and children confined in camps were placed on full rations if they voluntarily surrendered, but on reduced rations if the husbands and fathers did not surrender.—Mr. BRODRICK—I am in communication with Lord Kitchener on this subject. The difficulty of feeding the very large number of persons coming into these camps is very great; and I understand that a distinction has been drawn between those who surrendered with their husbands and fathers and those who come in to be fed while their relations are still in the field. ("Oh.") The information, however, at my disposal is not sufficient to enable me to give an exact answer at this moment.

[Mr. Brodrick has since informed the House that this disgraceful method of conquest was repealed on Feb. 27th—in deference to the protests of honourable men and to the indignation of the foreign consuls. See App. D. p. 269.]

It is almost certain that the man who initiated a policy so atrocious and cowardly was no true-born Englishman, but was, like the originator of the methods described on page 241, either a South African Loyalist or a cosmopolitan capitalist. Whatever men may say of the decadence of English chivalry, all Englishmen will believe that the first instinct of an English general would be to follow the example of the heroic Camillus. A similar method of subduing his foes was proposed to him during the blockade of the Etruscan city Falerii. A miserable schoolmaster, wishing to curry favour with the Roman besiegers, led his pupils one day within the Roman lines, and, handing them over to Camillus, bade him threaten that unless the men of Falerii surrendered their city, their children should be tormented and crucified. When Camillus heard this he became very wrath and stamped his foot, and, looking round at the Roman captains, he said, "War is war, an evil thing; but

Even under improved conditions the mortality is appalling.<sup>1</sup> If this system of concentration is continued for two years a considerable portion of the non-combatant population of the two Republics will be dead. It is hardly necessary to say that the effects of such a policy will be disastrous to the good name of England.

Our new method of warfare involves three stages—devastation, deportation, and imprisonment. It is a novel method for a civilised country, and the only

among brave men there is a law in war as there is a law in peace. A noble general must win victory by his own valour and by the arts of the Romans. What think you of this cunning counsel?"

And they cried out "It is the counsel of a cur.

Then Camillus said, "Fetch me the hangman and he bade the hangman strip the schoolmaster stark naked and tie his hands behind him. And they brought forth whips and rods and gave one to each of the children, and told them to whip the cowardly knave back to the town. And when the citizens of Falerii, who were grieving sorely for their children, saw what was happening they called out, "The gods bless noble Camillus"; and they forthwith sent ambassadors unto him and placed their lives and property in his hands. Thus was an honourable peace made between Rome and Falerii.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brodrick said on June 17th, 1901, that there had been 80 deaths in the Johannesburg camp during May, a rate of over 300 per thousand in the year. He said there had been 336 deaths in the Transvaal camps, and that their population was 37,939. This means a death-rate of nearly 110 per thousand in the year. The anonymous correspondent of the *Times*, in an article designed to give the brightest side of the picture, puts the death-rate in the Orange Free State camps at 116 per thousand, and in the Bloemfontein camp at 383 per thousand in the year. These figures mean that the average rate of mortality throughout the Orange Free State camps is considerably more than twice the rate of mortality from all causes in our army. In these camps there are over 30,000 women and children.

precedents with which modern history provides us are those of General Weyler and of certain warriors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries whom we need not specify. The method is not only novel, but it is also dangerous. We had dragged these unfortunate creatures from their homes and they were our prisoners. It was therefore our obvious duty that they should be provided with sufficient food, and it should have been a point of honour with us to see that the wives and children of our enemies were cared for, with particular and chivalrous attention.

It is not necessary to accuse the Government of conscious barbarism. No opponent, however bitter, would impute to them a deliberate desire to exterminate the Boer population by the methods which they have adopted. But the results of blundering folly may be as cruel as conscious cruelty. It is clear that the same want of common sense, of organising power, of foresight and imagination which led them into this deplorable war and into its many disasters, has also led them into the policy of devastation with its necessary results of detention in prison camps which have become homes of death for the Boer women and children. The sufferings and martyrdom of these women and children will leave to us a lasting disgrace and to every Boer a bitter hatred of our race.

But the third policy of the Government was as unsuccessful as the two former policies. The Government appear to have been inspired throughout this campaign by the madness which it is said the gods inflict on those whom they intend to ruin. All through this campaign you can trace the hand of the ignorant and incompetent civilian. Our Ministers were still unable to grasp the difference

between unconditional submission and submission on reasonable and honourable terms. They imagined that to annex and devastate two countries was to secure the surrender of their armies, and that pompous and puerile proclamations and violent speeches could compensate for military failure. They made the further mistake of attempting to use the refugees to sow dissension amongst the burghers in the field; and the bitterness of the struggle was exasperated by the execution, real or alleged, of some of these so-called "peace envoys" by the Boer leaders.

Though it could no longer be concealed that the military position in South Africa was steadily growing worse the Government determined in September to secure a new lease of office before they were found out, to end the war on paper, and to conquer the Boers by a General Election and by rhetoric on the hustings. Lord Roberts was rash enough to proclaim that the war was over, and the Government, urging the electors that a Ministerial victory would smother the dying embers of warfare, obtained a great majority. It is not easy to understand by what arguments Lord Roberts persuaded himself that the active campaign was at an end. To unprejudiced eyes it was clear that the enemy was still unconquered, and that our army was in difficulties was proved shortly after Lord Roberts's departure by the evacuation of many of the posts our troops had been holding. In his despatch of February 6, 1901,<sup>1</sup> Lord Milner points out that the six months after July, 1900, had been months of military "retrogression," and Lord Roberts's optimism in December

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book, Cd. 547, p. 55.



—at least four months after that “retrogression” had commenced—was clearly founded on no sound basis. His declaration is only to be explained first by his characteristic tendency to look on the brighter side of events; secondly, by his wish to please the Government and the public; and thirdly, by a not unnatural desire to prove to the world that he had completed the work which he had not been allowed to complete “nineteen years ago.” But such a declaration was eminently unfair to his successor, who would be held by the public to have failed in the easy task which, according to Lord Roberts, had been left him. Lord Kitchener indeed deserves the sympathy of all generous men. His difficulties, caused in a great degree by the rash strategy of his predecessor, have been enormous, and if he fails the fault will not be his.

The military methods of the Government were therefore as unsuccessful as their political efforts. They believed what they wished to believe, and, assuming that the war was practically over, they neglected to feed their wearied army with a steady flow of drafts and recruits. A considerable number of soldiers were withdrawn from South Africa, and in December the position of our forces, which had been growing steadily worse since the occupation of Komati Poort, began to be most serious.

After the fall of Pretoria, it was hoped that the enemy would submit: the Boer forces appeared to be scattered and to have lost their capacity for sustained or concentrated movement. But it is doubtful whether the campaign has ever presented the true form of guerilla warfare. That class of warfare is

generally confined to the action of small bodies under independent leaders, possessing no cohesion and displaying no organised methods for the attaining of a common end. Moreover, guerilla warfare is almost invariably accompanied by great cruelty on the part of the guerillas and by an ostentatious neglect of the honourable conventions of war. Those who have followed intelligently the course of the campaign since the fall of Pretoria will allow that the Boers have been chivalrous foes and that their plan of campaign, far from being the fortuitous product of independent bands, has been inspired not only by remarkable boldness and originality but by strategical skill and methodical aims.

The Boers, who had at the commencement of the war been wanting in discipline and initiative, were becoming veterans, seasoned, bold, and able to take the offensive without hesitation. Although their food supplies must have been very scanty and their ammunition could not have been superabundant, they seemed to have enough food and enough ammunition to continue a campaign which was exhausting and dangerous to our army. Their generals began to display, in addition to the extraordinary mobility which had always characterised them, a tactical and a strategical skill which extorted the unwilling admiration of their enemy. In fine, the position in January, 1901, was in its essence, if not in its outward aspect, more dangerous than the position in January, 1900. At the latter date we had not exhausted our regular forces, we had still 200,000 men on whom we could draw, we had still in reserve the skill and the prestige of Lord Roberts and the administrative ability of Lord Kitchener.

The greater part of our army consisted of infantry, and out of 200,000 men whom we had in South Africa 100,000 must have been tied down to the railway and the important strategical points, while perhaps 20,000 or 25,000 were sick of fever and of the fatigue which a long campaign inevitably brings. We probably had no more than 20,000 mounted men to throw upon the Boers at any given point, and, in a word, our great army, which outnumbered the Boers by twelve to one, was placed on the defensive. In January, 1901, our regular reserves were exhausted, Lord Roberts had returned, and Lord Kitchener seemed embarrassed by the coil of untoward circumstances. We had only the patriotism of our citizens and of our colonies to depend upon; and if the supply of volunteers were to fail, we should be left impotent in the presence of the greatest military danger that England has ever faced.

The military situation was in the middle of December made worse by the sudden irruption of several Boer commandoes into Cape Colony. It is not at present clear what object the Boers had in this invasion; but we may without much risk assume that they were determined, by enlarging the area of the war, to weaken our communications and to draw a great portion of our army from Pretoria to the south. The Boers had countless sympathisers in the Colony, and they probably knew quite clearly what their reception was likely to be. They did not expect to be reinforced by a large number of colonial Dutch, though some recruits were certain to join their forces. Their chief objects were to collect supplies and horses and to raise a new campaign in Cape Colony, a thousand miles from

the main body of our troops in the Transvaal, and to force the English general to choose between abandoning the Colony and slackening his grip on the Transvaal.

They probably argued that Lord Kitchener, whose troops were barely sufficient to hold their present positions with success, would not be able to continue the campaign in the Transvaal and to offer any resistance to them in Cape Colony. By this extraordinary and brilliant feat the Boers at once practically doubled the area of the war, and an army which was impotent to hold the two Republics was obviously incapable of entering into serious offensive measures against the Boers both in Cape Colony and in the northern Transvaal. From Cape Colony we have not yet been able to drive the invaders, and our inability to capture or defeat them is a measure of our weakness.

The line of frontier between the Free State and Cape Colony is so long that it can be efficiently guarded only by a larger number of troops than Lord Kitchener can spare. It is evident that the Boers have no difficulty in crossing and re-crossing it, and it is probable that they have been able to send to their commandoes in the two Republics a fair number of recruits, a considerable number of horses, and many supplies. The Boers have now been settled in Cape Colony for over six months. They are obviously increasing their hold on that territory, and the fact that the greater number of the inhabitants of the country districts are sympathetic to the Boers makes it probable that unless we can expel them within a reasonable time the greater part of the colony will be overrun by small bodies of the invaders, and a

heavy strain will be placed on the loyalty of our Dutch colonists.<sup>1</sup> Our military position is thus made most dangerous, for at the end of his long line of communications and near his chief bases of supply, more than a thousand miles from his extreme point of occupation, Lord Kitchener has to deal with a daring and mobile foe, ready to fall upon his lines and to overwhelm the weak bodies of troops which are the only forces which he can at present put into the field.

The tactics of the Boers became more daring. Every day some point of the railway was cut, small posts were overwhelmed, and the casualty lists became alarming in their length. Enteric fever and the diseases which come of exhaustion and insufficient food began to tell upon our army. The men were growing "stale" and dissatisfied. But the Government made no sign. Whether they still hoped that Lord Kitchener, by a supreme effort, would be able to shake off his indefatigable foes, or whether they believed that the sudden activity of the Boers was but the last flicker of the lamp before extinction, we do not know.

The one fatal and radical error of the Government is that they have been without a definite policy from the beginning, unless we dignify by that term their threat to force the Boers to unconditional submission. It was the duty of Ministers to have a serious plan either of war or of settlement, but no vestige of a plan has

<sup>1</sup> Since this was written, the military position in Cape Colony has steadily grown worse, and the Boers are obviously gaining many recruits, whose number will be increased by the mad policy of the gallows which we are following. See Note, pp. 241, 242.

a rapid movement to carry with him the proper medical equipment, and the burden of fatigue which was laid upon the army was a direct cause of that terrible outbreak of disease which swept away the men in hundreds. The "regrettable incidents" which followed in quick succession were the necessary outcome of a movement which, brilliant as it seemed, was the negation of military prudence. The advance on Pretoria, undertaken in the same rash spirit, produced similar results. We entered the town, but we did not capture the forces of the enemy. Again, our flanks and rear were left open to the Boers, and it was impossible properly to feed a force which advanced more rapidly than its supplies. As Lord Roberts has himself confessed, for a day it seemed that the army would have to choose between starvation and retreat.

The very high estimate which the public has formed of the achievements of Lord Roberts in South Africa has undoubtedly, and not unnaturally, been founded on the immense change which his advent at the head of an enormous army wrought in the military position in the early days of 1900. The nation had passed through an ordeal of suspense and sorrow, and it was profoundly grateful to the general who had so quickly transformed the aspect of affairs. Courteous and brave, he is the most popular soldier of the last fifty years, but the historian will be forced to explain this popularity on the grounds we have suggested, and by the fascination of his personality, rather than by the lasting success of his strategy. The full history of the campaign will not be written for many years, and the natural tendency of the military chronicler

to minimise ugly facts, to gloss over mistakes, and to explain defeats, may perhaps conceal the full measure of our failure. The greatest commanders of history have not seldom possessed the highest political instinct, but Lord Roberts was unable to appreciate the political factors of the situation ; while the military risks which he deliberately accepted were so disproportionate to their possible advantages and so disastrous in their results, that it is impossible for the cool observer to deny that the career of Lord Roberts in South Africa has been unequal to his renown.

But let it not be forgotten that our failure in South Africa has been a political rather than a military failure. The politicians have set the soldiers to do a work of enormous difficulty with insufficient material ; for, as Lord Roberts has told us, great as is our force in South Africa, it has proved all too small for its duties. The ill-informed criticisms which were showered on our army during the period of our disasters, the attacks on our artillery—the very branch of the army whose services have been most heroic and distinguished—on our officers and our soldiers, do not touch the root of the matter. If the soldier has failed, it is because the politician has blundered.

We have seen how the insistence on unconditional submission has prolonged this war ; it is not less evident that its early disasters were due to political incapacity. The Government entered upon this war in wilful blindness. For many months it must have been clear to them that in insisting upon a reform of the franchise in the Transvaal they were offering to the Boers an ultimatum, and that it would be necessary for

them, if their proposals were declined, to enforce them by war. That they were prepared for a warlike issue we have recently heard from the lips of Lord Wolseley, who has told us<sup>\*</sup> that in June, 1899, he frequently and earnestly urged upon the Government the necessity of seizing Delagoa Bay, and of preparing a large force to protect Natal from invasion; and yet never has a Ministry entered the lists of war in such a spirit of ignorance and levity.

In June, 1899, four months before the outbreak of the war, an interesting little volume was issued by the Intelligence Department of the War Office to a considerable number of officers. This book is entitled "Military Notes on the Dutch Republics of South Africa." It contains 119 pages, and is divided into twelve chapters. One of the most remarkable features of this book is its accuracy. Its conclusions are often wrong; but as a collection of facts—and after all the business of an Intelligence Department is to provide trustworthy materials for judgment, and not to relieve all the other departments of State from the necessity of thinking—the book is beyond praise. We have been assured by the Government that they were completely surprised by the warlike attitude of the Boers, by their strength, and by the perfection of their armaments. Yet this book, which is the official publication of the War Office, estimates that the Boer forces would, in the case of war, number about 56,000 men. This number is, if we regard only the forces of the two Republics, somewhat exaggerated; but if in it we include a considerable portion of the Out-

<sup>\*</sup> House of Lords, March, 1901.



landers fighting for the Boers, it has been proved moderately accurate.

Lord Salisbury has told us that the Government was astonished at the existence of modern guns among the Boers, and that he presumed they had been smuggled into the Transvaal in boilers and locomotives and piano cases. This little book, however, gives full details of the Boer artillery, and of its origin and manufacture. It is interesting to read the statement that only some 13,000 rifles were in the country before the Jameson Raid and that the whole of the remainder have been purchased since that date in England, France, Germany, and Belgium.

When war seemed imminent, the Prime Ministers of our Colonies made to the Colonial Office offers of patriotic assistance. The Government acknowledged these offers in suitable terms, and stated that *unmounted men* would be preferred. Three months after the war had begun, Mr. Balfour stated in words of pathetic astonishment the astounding fact that the Boers had horses. It is clear that the Ministry had taken no trouble to learn the lessons drawn from the war of 1881 by the Intelligence Department, who were in no ignorance of the advantages possessed by the Boers as an army of mounted infantry. Mr. Balfour had evidently not read the following passage :—

“As regards mobility, it may be recollected that the force which was defeated at Laing’s Nek and Ingogo were operating on foot, with practically no mounted men, against men whose hunting experience had taught them to get the utmost advantage out of the use of their horses in approaching, sur-

prising, and surrounding large herds of antelopes. Moreover, South Africa is, of all countries, the most dangerous in the world for infantry to operate in without a screen of mounted troops in their front and on their flanks. The tactics employed by the Boers were, in fact, such as they had learned by hunting experience on the veldt. Alike in attack and defence, they acted on the same principle. Containing the enemy's front with a thin but well-posted body of skirmishers, they utilised every fold of ground to gallop unseen round his flanks, and then, leaving their horses, which are trained to stand without holders, under cover, gradually concentrated a ring of overwhelming fire on their objective."

Mr. Balfour at the end of November, 1899, stated that if he had been asked two months ago whether it was likely that they would be at war with the Orange Free State, he would have answered, "You might as well expect us to be at war with Switzerland." The little book of the Intelligence Department issued in the previous June would have instructed his amiable simplicity. Here it is distinctly stated—

"There can be no question that if war ensues between the Transvaal and the Suzerain Power as a result of the differences made apparent at the Bloemfontein Conference (1899), the Free State, who has already declared by the mouth of her Raad that she entirely approves of President Kruger's proposals, will undoubtedly throw in her lot with the sister Republic."

What an Iliad of woes sprang from the neglect of this plain warning!

Mr. Balfour, in January, 1900, described the entanglement of Ladysmith as being beyond the reasonable calculations of the Government. The Military Notes would have given him definite warning on this point, for in them it is distinctly stated that the Transvaal Boers intended to concentrate with the Free State force west of the Drakensberg and to advance on Ladysmith through Van Reenen's Pass.

The Government have excused the miserable imperfection of their medical equipment on the ground that no reasonable person could have expected a grave outbreak of enteric fever. The Military Notes contain a distinct warning that enteric fever, which had been in past campaigns prevalent among our troops, was a danger against which every precaution should be taken.

I have made these quotations from the Military Notes because they go far to prove the statement that the failure of our campaign has been due rather to the ignorance and blindness and carelessness of our Government than to the blunders of our army. There is in the Cabinet a small body of men called the Defence Committee. It is the duty of these Ministers to meet from time to time, to consider those measures which are necessary to safeguard the military and naval interests of our Empire and to lay before the Cabinet the various proposals which seem to them necessary. It is therefore reasonable to expect that this Committee, before engaging in a war with another Power, should acquaint itself with

the obvious facts of the military situation and with the resources of the Governments opposed to us. If Mr. Balfour and his colleagues did not make themselves acquainted with the warnings and the statements contained in the official Notes of the Intelligence Department, or if, having read them, they failed to appreciate and to act upon them, they have been guilty not only of a blunder but also of a crime, and on them must fall the greater share of the responsibility for the disasters and the prolongation of this unhappy war.

But we have had to combat foes more terrible than the errors of our politicians or than the skill and courage of the Boers. To the invader of a difficult country the forces of Nature are generally more deadly than the forces of man. The Transvaal and the Free State form together an enormous territory—rugged, desolate, sparsely peopled, not one quarter of a million of white inhabitants, with few good roads and few large towns. A hostile army cannot live on such a country. It is therefore dependent for its very existence on its lines of communication, and such lines must be guarded with the utmost care. The strength of these lines is the strength of their weakest part, and a temporary interruption may involve a month's delay in the advance of the army or the semi-starvation of thousands of troops; nor is any communication more delicate than 2,000 miles of a single railway line which forms the sole means of feeding an enormous force. The railway line, in truth, has been to us a danger and a temptation: we have run along it as along the line of least resistance; we have run too far and we are tied to it. It is probable that

if no line had been in existence, our work of conquest would have been more leisurely and therefore more surely done. It is not untrue then to say that the railway has been a powerful ally of our enemy, and that the celerity of our premature advance has been the measure of our subsequent failure.

The climate, benign to the native of the country, is unkind to the stranger, and foreign troops can ill bear the sudden changes from heat to cold, from deluges of rain to parching drought. The enormous labours of a protracted campaign in such a country lower the physical strength of the soldiers and bring in their train fever and dysentery and languid depression. Nor are the horses less liable to disease than the men, and the horse-sickness of South Africa is so deadly that 75 per cent. of the animals attacked perish of the malady. We have been fighting Distance and Disease, and these two foes have often conquered the conquering invader.

A country so vast can be defended by a relatively small force, and can only be efficiently occupied by an enemy if he possesses an immense army, and if he is able to feed that army. Moreover, the issue of a campaign of this character is not decided by the aggregate numbers of the invading forces, but by the rapidity with which they can bring at a given moment a considerable number of men to bear on a given point. To distribute a large force evenly over an immense surface is to lose effective power and the ability to crush your foe.

The magnitude of the task of our troops in South Africa may be realised from the following

figures of the areas included in the theatre of war :—

						Square Miles.
Cape Colony	...	...	...	...	...	277,151
Transvaal	...	...	...	...	...	113,640
Orange River Colony	...	...	...	...	...	48,326
Natal	...	...	...	...	...	18,913
Total						458,030

Any one who will take a large scale map and will measure the distances in miles between the various small towns and villages which we have occupied and held will appreciate the immense difficulties which our army has experienced in protecting and feeding the posts distant from the main lines of communication. We have destroyed the food which otherwise might have sustained our troops; we have therefore to despatch at frequent intervals convoys of supplies, which, slowly and laboriously moving, are ever liable to the attacks of the mobile Boers. The detachments which hold the outlying posts are constantly on short rations and always in a tense and nervous strain. Wherever there is a British post, there a mile or so off hovers a shadowing commando. After some months the position becomes intolerable, and, to save a breakdown of the garrison, the town is evacuated and the troops are moved to a position of greater security. At the beginning of 1901 a large number of the towns formerly held by our troops were evacuated and the immense districts round them passed again into the hands of our enemy. This process of evacuation is styled "concentration," and, though the policy which dictates it is a sound and a prudent one, it is also a definite

proof that we are endeavouring to occupy a half-conquered country with a diminishing and hopelessly inadequate force.

No event is the outcome of a single antecedent circumstance. We may blame the incapacity of our Government and the errors of our generals, our want of mounted troops, the vast distances, sickness and climate. But causes are moral as well as physical ; and we must not forget the moral causes—our own pride and the character of the Boer. With a flippancy and shallowness that cannot be too strongly condemned, the Government assumed that the enemy would weaken at their loud words, that he was not really in earnest, that he did not mean what he said, and could not do what we did not wish him to do. A nation cannot dispense with the quality of pride ; but the pride which disdains facts and prefers to run its head against any obstacle rather than to use its eyes, always has led and always will lead to disaster. It was pride of this kind that caused us to misjudge the character of the Boers, to underestimate their resources, and to decry their military skill.

We may justly assume that British infantry have suffered no considerable deterioration since the days of Wellington, and we must seek in the qualities of our foe one of the causes of our failure. The religious and patriotic fervour of the Boers, their courage, their extraordinary mobility, their fertility of resource, and their skill in the management and preservation of their horses have proved of enormous advantage to them. They are born hunters and soldiers. It is a simple fact that only twice in our history have British infantry been unequal to the task assigned them. In 1775–81 our

apply to a European race. The Boer is not a German or a Frenchman; he can live where an Englishman would starve. It has been said that an army moves on its stomach; but the Boer can carry in his saddlebag sufficient food for a fortnight. He can ride all day or all night without tiring his horse, and can keep it going for a fortnight. He is accustomed to a life of hardship in the open air. Nor must we place too much confidence in the probable failure of his food or ammunition. One of our gravest errors has been to compare in our own minds our struggle against the Boers with a war which Germany might wage against France, or Italy against Austria. We have hoped that the flight of the enemy's main bodies or the occupation of their capitals would imply their submission or subjugation as a nation. But the Boers are not a European nation. Their order of civilisation is not that of a European country where the chief population is gathered in towns and where to capture the great cities is to annihilate the resistance of the Governments. The Boers are farmers, and to capture Pretoria or Bloemfontein is not to sever a main artery and destroy the life of the State. In a highly developed State organism the life of the parts depends on the centre. Not so in the Boer Republics. Each part as it is severed seems capable of separate life, and our task is comparable to the labour of Hercules in his bouts with the Hydra. Nor has the resource of Hercules availed us much. We have indeed destroyed many of their farms and have attempted to clear their lands of cattle and standing crops, just as Iolas in the fable



applied the burning iron to the wounds of the Hydra as each head was cut off. But it is impossible to kill all the sources of life, and it is probable that there still remains in the two territories sufficient to feed the Boers for several years.

If any man asks what reasonable hope we can form of ending the 'war *without negotiations* within a definite period, we are bound to answer that our final victory must be measured by the annihilation of the Boers. While a thousand Boers remain with bandoliers full and biltong enough to keep body and soul together, so long will they resist our occupation and so long will our victory be incomplete. If we are to estimate the resisting power of our foes we must, to a certain extent, calculate by the methods of arithmetic. Most of the prisoners whom our flying columns have lately captured have been old men or boys or non-combatant Boers; but let us assume that we catch or kill 300 fighting Boers in a month, and to this number let us add a further 150 incapacitated by wounds or disease. If we multiply 450 by 12 we arrive at a total of 5,400; and if we assume that the number of Boers still in arms against us is 17,000 men, we find that at the end of a year we shall have accounted for less than a third of the number of our enemy. Nor must we forget two things—(1) that the Boers are daily strengthening their hold on Cape Colony and gaining recruits, and (2) that the operations of small bodies of Boers are almost as dangerous, and disconcerting to the peace of the country as the movements of larger bodies.

The Boers have not, indeed, operated in considerable bodies, but their generals have commanded

and are commanding in several places forces which number from 2,000 to 4,000 men, and as the whole force of the two Republics did not, in the first instance, number more than 45,000 men, and as their forces are now spread over an enormous extent of country, it is not incorrect to say that a force of 2,000 Boers is, in relation to the numbers at their disposal, as regular and substantial a body of men as an army corps would be in relation to the aggregate forces of France or Germany. That this war, if it is continued, will degenerate into a guerilla war is true. But it does not follow that because it will so degenerate it will become less difficult. It is a historical fact that no war is so difficult to suppress as the irregular warfare which the population of a vast country, fighting for its independence, is able to carry on against the invader. A guerilla war can be extended for an indefinite period by a brave and hardy race without any visible means of subsistence. Food and ammunition find their way through a hundred unknown approaches. Sympathisers at home and abroad never cease to send the necessities of life and warfare, and hundreds of willing and adventurous hands will furnish the foes of England the means which they require. The country is enormous, the population is sparse, and the difficulties of policing it will be almost insuperable. The Boers will have three great factors in their favour. They will have time, and distance, and the character of their people. Time may exhaust our army through disease and weariness; distance may increase our difficulties to the breaking point; and the character of their people will preserve in their hearts the undying hope of freedom. Against them are the

fewness of their numbers and their isolation from the rest of the world.

The recent examples of such warfare are ominous, and the fact that the Minister of War thought it necessary to mention these examples in December is evidence that the Ministry have at last begun to take a serious view of the prospects of a speedy pacification of the two provinces. The war which Spain waged for many years in Cuba and the Philippines had no result save that of exhaustion for Spain. Napoleon in Spain found it impossible to suppress a war which the guerillas waged without cessation against his finest troops; and the third Napoleon saw his army consume away under the incessant attacks of the Mexicans and the slow inroad of disease. We ourselves have twice invaded Afghanistan in order to establish there a dominant influence, and both in 1842 and 1881 we were forced to abandon the country, leaving little but our dead behind. The forces of nature, the pressure of disease and weariness proved invincible foes, and Lord Roberts was wise in counselling his Government to retire from a land which it was impossible to hold effectively. America, too, is experiencing the humiliating difficulties which we, if we are unwise, are likely to experience in South Africa. It is true that the Russians were able to subdue and to hold Poland; and that Austria, after many efforts, has pacified Bosnia; and that England holds Ireland in comparative peace. But the conditions which obtain in these instances are absent in the case of South Africa. Poland is on the frontier of Russia, Bosnia is on the frontier of Austria,

and Ireland is but a few hours distant from England. The three subject territories can therefore be invaded at a few hours' notice by the conqueror, and the army of occupation can be fed and reinforced with as little difficulty as London can send provisions to Edinburgh. The two annexed territories are not on our confines. The land which borders them on the south is now disloyal and hostile, and the two Republics and Cape Colony are 6,000 miles from our shores.

What is now the military situation in South Africa? In spite of the optimistic telegrams of correspondents and the hopeful outlook of Ministers, it cannot be denied that the situation is unsatisfactory. As we have said, the test of success is the power of effective occupation. There is little practical value in the seizure of a town or position by an army if that army is obliged to evacuate it in a short time; and we have evacuated most of the towns we once held. For six months we have evidently been losing ground: nor was it necessary to have Lord Milner's confirmation of our worst fears to know that we hold now in the two Republics far less territory than we held in September, 1900.

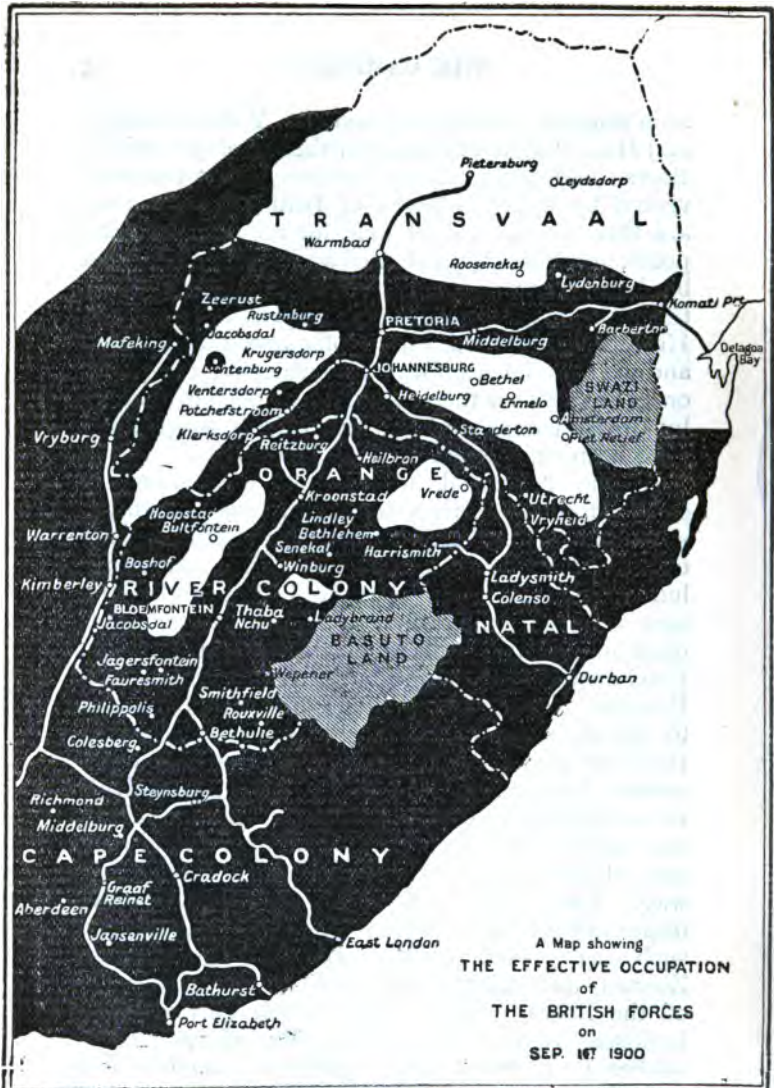
The simple fact is that, as the second of our two maps will show,<sup>†</sup> the only posts efficiently held by us in the Transvaal and the Free State are, with a few exceptions, our positions on the various railway lines, and a belt, a few miles wide, on each side of the line. The northern portion of the Free State, in which are situated

<sup>†</sup> We have no official details, and the theatre of war shifts from day to day. These maps can therefore be only approximately accurate.

such important towns as Senekal, Vrede, Lindley, and Hoopstad, is obviously in the possession of the Boers; and though these districts are at intervals visited by flying columns of British troops, they are three weeks out of four, for all practical purposes, under Boer jurisdiction and are administered by Boer commandants. The southern district of the same State contains such towns as Wepener, Helvetia, Smithfield, Philippolis, and Fauresmith; and we have been informed in successive telegrams or letters that all these places have been evacuated by British troops, and that the British magistrates have been superseded by Boer landdrosts.

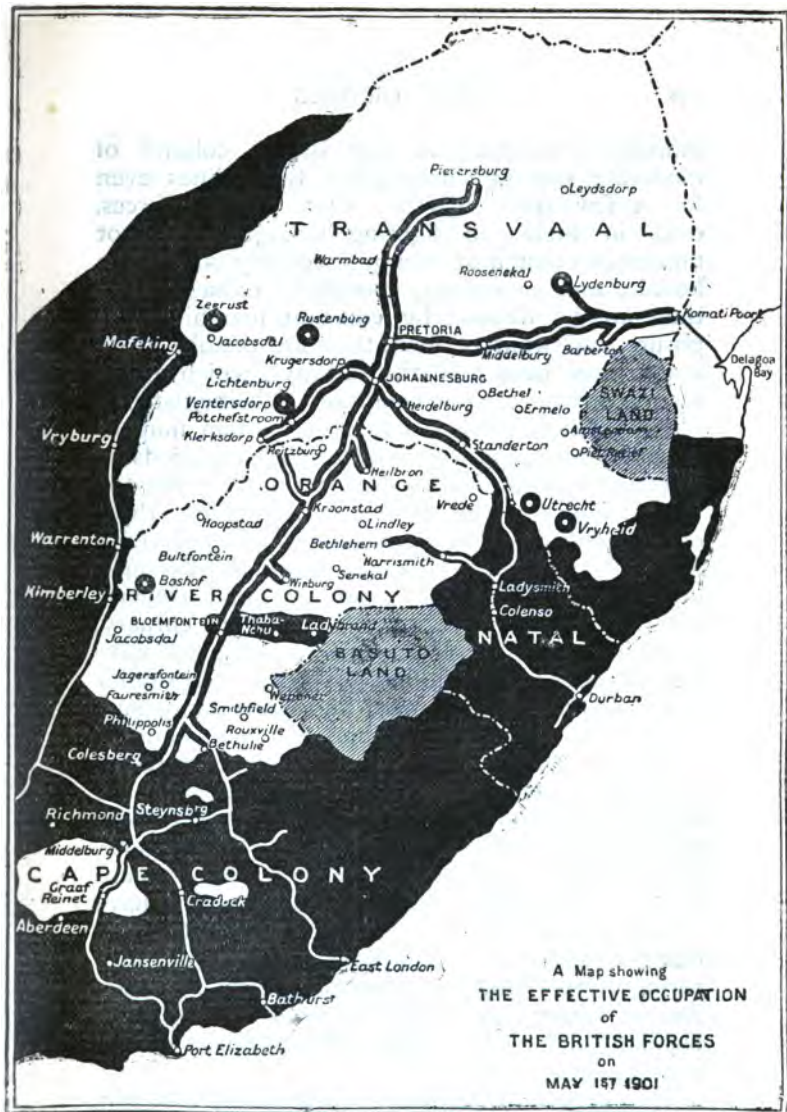
In the Transvaal, where there is obviously a greater force of British troops, there is probably a somewhat more effective occupation, but even here our position is extraordinary and somewhat ludicrous. We have been told that under the new civil administration of Lord Milner, resident magistrates will be established in Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Johannesburg, Krugersdorp, and Boksburg. These five towns are important, and to the casual reader it might appear satisfactory that we are now in a position to make them centres for our magistrates; but it is not difficult to see the motive of their choice. They are all on the railway and are therefore under the protection of the British troops which guard that railway. The other chief towns of the Transvaal, important either for local or strategical causes, such as Ventersdorp, Bethel, Rustenburg, Zeerust, and Lichtenburg, are in the possession of the Boers, or else their British garrisons are besieged by the Boers. The life of no British soldier is worth a day's purchase outside our

# MAP I



The portion of this map which is coloured black, denotes more or less effective occupation by British garrisons. Such occupation was never absolutely effective, and was always liable to be disturbed by the siege of the garrisons. The portion of the map in white was in the occupation of the Boers.

## MAP 2



The portion of this map which is coloured black, denotes the occupation of the British. The portion in white is not held by British troops, and the Boer occupation is only disturbed at intervals by the "sweeping movements" of British mobile columns. The black belt on each side of the railway line denotes roughly our effective power over a few miles on each side of that line, but there is no means of preventing the Boers from crossing and recrossing in most places.

military lines, nor can any British column of moderate size in safety leave those lines even for a few days' march. Our present forces, even in their full fighting strength, are not numerous enough to occupy a country so vast, so hostile, and so sparsely peopled; exhausted as they are by disease, by constant marching, exposure, and want of food, they are unable to do much more than hold the railways, which are to them the indispensable condition of their existence.

Lord Kitchener has, indeed, a certain number of mounted troops whom he can, after periods of rest and refreshment, send forth against the too mobile forces of the Boers. What success these operations have attained, any one who has carefully followed the events of the last six months may easily appreciate. We know now that General French's great converging movement in February, 1901, in the Eastern Transvaal was, from the military point of view, a failure. Nor were the similar movements of April, May, and June more successful. We did not surround the main body of the Boers, and in spite of enormous captures of stock, the enemy still manages to subsist in the districts we denuded. The same thing has taken place in the south-east corner of the Orange State. Our failure to capture De Wet and his commandoes is not exceptional, but typical. We have won isolated triumphs against De La Rey and other Boer leaders; and we are constantly capturing or receiving the surrender of small bodies. But of victory on a large scale, of the gradual envelopment of the chief fighting forces of our enemy, there is no sign.

If to reduce the numbers of our enemy is to win,



we are winning: but the slow victory which results from the overwhelming weight of superior forces is almost as humiliating as defeat; and can we afford to win so slowly? What will be the state of our own army at the end of another year of unceasing warfare?<sup>1</sup> That is a question which few men are able, and some would not dare, to answer; but we must face it. We are losing now by death, wounds, and sickness from 3,000 to 4,000 men a month.<sup>2</sup> Nor has winter been greatly in our favour. Winter quarters relieve the tension of an ordinary campaign, but in South Africa the warfare and the strain are unceasing. The growing exhaustion of the army has rendered it more susceptible to disease, and the cold, working on weakened constitutions, intensifies the sufferings of the men. We do not know how many of our 250,000 soldiers are efficient, but we do know that 20,000 are in hospital; we may assume that 100,000 are guarding the lines, and that hundreds are being incapacitated every week by disease and weariness for the performance of those labours which are only possible to men of unimpaired physique and undaunted

<sup>1</sup> It is bare justice to say that at one time almost alone among a chorus of optimistic prophets one military critic has from the first foreseen the dangers of this campaign. Colonel H. B. Hanna, in various letters and articles, was wise enough and courageous enough, even at the time of our triumphant advances, to say that our elation was premature, and that distance, disease, and depression were foes more difficult to conquer than the Boers. He pointed out that the invaded territory was one which it would be impossible effectively to occupy without an enormous army, and that in a land so vast and hostile it would be impossible for an indefinite period to feed such an army.

<sup>2</sup> The following table gives the total number of casualties reached month by month from the beginning of the war

spirit. Lord Kitchener knows what his army can do; he knows what it cannot do. He wishes that this war should cease on terms honourable to the Boers. Could any fact be more significant?

If the Government is in earnest, and if this war is to end in a complete and speedy victory for our forces we must at once recruit those forces with substantial reinforcements. Whether Lord Kitchener can feed a greater army or whether

to April, 1901. In this table the prisoners recovered are deducted from the totals :—

	Killed in action.	Died of wounds.	Missing & prisoners.	Died of disease.	Sent home invalided.	Total.
Oct. 1899 to						
Feb. 1900	1,652...	264...	3,244 ...	723 ...	2,306 ...	8,237†
March.....	2,130 ...	461 ...	3,476 ...	1,207 ...	4,004 ...	11,687
April .....	2,221 ...	533 ...	3,958 ...	1,909 ...	6,149 ...	14,824
May .....	2,369 ...	588 ...	4,526 ...	3,173 ...	11,343 ...	22,045
June .....	2,634 ...	657 ...	1,687* ...	4,100 ...	17,142 ...	26,298
July .....	2,731 ...	732 ...	2,818 ...	4,867 ...	23,655 ...	34,803
August.....	2,880 ...	811 ...	2,833 ...	5,363 ...	28,497 ...	40,561
Sept. ....	3,037 ...	911 ...	819* ...	5,903 ...	31,626 ...	42,296
October ...	3,204 ...	982 ...	829 ...	6,270 ...	34,499 ...	45,784
Nov.....	3,329 ...	1,044 ...	1,250 ...	6,719 ...	37,099 ...	49,728
Dec.....	3,540 ...	1,132 ...	903* ...	7,181 ...	38,624 ...	51,687
1901						
January ...	3,680 ...	1,184 ...	937 ...	7,793 ...	40,798 ...	54,724
February	3,824 ...	1,284 ...	800 ...	8,385 ...	42,357 ...	56,958
March .....	3,936 ...	1,301 ...	775* ...	8,803 ...	45,426 ...	60,625
April .....	4,022 ...	1,345 ...	781† ...	9,181 ...	47,739 ...	63,498
May .....	4,188 ...	1,404 ...	715* ...	9,667 ...	49,061 ...	66,197
June.....	4,355 ...	1,470 ...	793 ...	10,037 ...	52,956 ...	69,921
July .....	4,475 ...	1,514 ...	566* ...	10,227 ...	54,095 ...	71,383

\* Reduction in number of prisoners due to release.

† The discrepancy between these totals and the sum of the items given is due to the deaths from accidents, which have not been set out in detail.

‡ The total of prisoners taken during the war, not deducting those recovered, is 8,781.

the despatch of reinforcements will enable us to conquer and to hold a country so difficult, is uncertain; and as we shall show later, the ultimate results of a policy of conquest will be disastrous. But Ministers must decide whether they will make war or make peace. To drift is fatal. It is useless to send out men in hundreds, for the wastage of our army proceeds at such a rapid rate that even if we despatch 3,000 men on a given day, they will hardly be sufficient to fill the gaps caused by sickness in the army while they are on the high seas. It is useless, too, to send out raw youths. Many of the boys who volunteered at the beginning of this year could neither shoot nor ride, and such soldiers are not only of no value: they are a positive danger.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the facile dogmatism of our newspaper critics, it is clear that the trained and disciplined valour of the regular soldier is of more value than the undisciplined fervour of volunteers.

<sup>1</sup> An officer now in England sends to a newspaper the following extract from a letter written by a friend at the front:—"All the Imperial Yeomanry patrols we have sent out from here have been captured by the Boers, who take their rifles and bandoliers, as they will guarantee to capture them as many times as they come out."

A yeoman in South Africa writes:—"The force . . . is comprised to some degree of the really criminal classes. Two Generals have absolutely declined to have any Yeomanry with them, and more will follow suit. I believe I am inside the mark when I say that less than fifteen per cent. were capable shots, and less than ten per cent. capable horsemen, and these were the men sent out to conquer a clever and a stubborn foe born to the use of his saddle and his rifle. There must be an awful row about this some time, and it is well that public men should be informed of the true facts of the case."

(*Westminster Gazette*, August 10, 1901.)

War is not altogether a sum in arithmetic. The most deadly foe of an army is one whom we cannot see and whom no words can adequately describe. It is called by many names—exhaustion, weariness, depression, heartsickness, staleness; but by whatever name it is known, it is invincible. If it is true that this enemy has found an entrance into the hearts of the British army in South Africa, we may be sure that no general of ours can conquer it. It can only be cured or vanquished by the despatch of new bodies of men to take the place of those worn out by its attack, by the exhilaration which comes of winning definite victories, by better food, by rest, and by the ceasing of the aimless pursuit of a phantom foe.

We are winning, and in time we can crush the Boers. They may either surrender in a body, or we may capture their main commandoes, or they may melt away in detail. But unless final victory comes to us soon, we may be obliged to avoid the complications and expense and exhaustion of continued war by offering to the Boers such terms as may induce them to lay down their arms. We may be forced to make a compromise which we could have made many months ago, and which, if then made, would have avoided the enormous expense and loss which we are now daily suffering. In theory we can continue the war indefinitely until every Boer is either dead or in prison. But in practice such a process may demand sacrifices so enormous that the tardy conqueror may well ask himself whether the result may not be as fatal as defeat.

It is impossible that the present situation can last indefinitely. Such a situation does not automati-

cally improve : on the other hand it becomes automatically worse. Time solves many problems ; but is time really on our side in this war ? When every week of war means the loss from one cause or another of a thousand men and of a million and a half of money, bids fair to ruin three British Colonies, decreases the efficiency and popularity of the army, aggravates the difficulty of working our voluntary military system, and maims our policy in all parts of the world—will ultimate victory be other than Cadmeian ?

## CHAPTER V

### THE ENEMY

NO nation can be just to its foes. The passions of war inflame our minds, and prejudice obscures the truth. We entered on this war in no spirit of chivalry.<sup>1</sup> Our journals, our clergy,<sup>2</sup> and many of our leaders vied with each other in heaping insults on the Boers. We conjured up for ourselves a fantastic and out-

<sup>1</sup> The fine chivalry of our attitude might be observed in the following utterance by the Lord-Lieutenant of an English county, addressing a public meeting :—

“Neither you nor I believe in these perpetual appeals to Providence in the wrong place and at the wrong time. Neither do we believe in these continual quotations from Scripture. We do not believe, either you or I or anybody else here, in the man who holds the Bible in one hand and the Mauser rifle in the other. (Cheers.) And another bit of advice I should like to give you is this—if you meet a gentleman, a somewhat aged gentleman, whose name begins with a K, anywhere down Pretoria way, I ask you to make him sing Psalms out of the wrong side of his mouth—(cheers)—and as to his cant, drive it down his throat with a dose of lyddite—(cheers)—and three inches of bayonet to keep it there. (Prolonged cheers.)”

<sup>2</sup> The following are typical examples of the methods by which ministers of the Church of England or Nonconformist Churches have stirred up strife.

(1) A well-known clergyman of the Church of England

rageous image which we called a Boer.<sup>1</sup> This savage being was hideous in form, unkempt and unwashed,<sup>2</sup> violent, hypocritical, a persecutor and an assassin of the English. He abused the

spoke, a few days before the war broke out, of President Kruger floating in a stream of blood.

(2) Here are two statements made about the same time by the well-known vicar of a Sussex parish.

"I may mention that a year ago a Mr. Edgar, when standing at his door, was shot dead by a Boer who happened to be passing, simply because he recognised him to be an Englishman."

"To-day a gentleman called upon me who, eight years ago, was in the Transvaal, and, what is more, a guest of Cronje during part of his sojourn in that country. Whilst with Cronje he saw him shoot two old Kaffir women because (as he said) they were too old for work!"

Could ignorant malice go further?

(3) Another clergyman uttered, and apparently believed, the following libel:—

"Paul Kruger had been charged with wedging a young girl between two pieces of wood, and sawing both wood and girl through the middle, because she refused to divulge the military secrets of her own tribe. That charge had not been denied."

<sup>1</sup> A paper of the highest position described the Boers as "brigands," "dacoits," "marauders," "ruffians," "filibusters," "banditti," "mobs of desperadoes," "midnight marauders," "squads of caterans." Another paper asserted that the Boer was a semi-savage; another compared him to a pickpocket or a burglar; yet another spoke of the Boers as "hounds," and of their conduct as "devilish."

<sup>2</sup> A great London newspaper printed a description of the surrender of Cronje, in which his followers were described as "cowardly," "shuffling," "unpatriotic," "cunning," "boorish," "ungrateful," "shifty-eyed," "clod-hopping," "cruel," "clumsy," "greedy," "cheating," "mean," "underhand," "foxy," "savage," "dull-witted," "misshapen," "treacherous," and "brutal." They were compared with pig-dealers, money-lenders, oxen, and orang-outangs.

white flag, he used explosive bullets, and he was altogether outside the pale of civilised nations a swindler, a coward, a brigand.

It was stated on October 9th, 1899, by the most popular of English papers that a Mr. Lanham had been kicked to death by brutal Boers, while the public was maddened by the tale of Englishmen "scourged with long rhinoceros whips; women struck with rifles, robbed, and reviled with brutal oaths and jeers; babes snatched from their mother's arms and flung back with insults." It was stated that the Boers in Northern Natal, before evacuating Newcastle and Dundee, defiled and desecrated the Catholic churches in those towns, and finally set fire to the buildings.

A circumstantial description was circulated in the daily papers of the slaughter of refugee women and children during the first few days of the war, followed by an account of the murder by the Boers at Harrismith of an Englishman named M'Lachlan who was shot for refusing to fight against England. M'Lachlan was in excellent health six months after this. The public was inflamed by the story of town guards dragged from their beds and shot in cold blood. It was also stated in a weekly journal that the Boer women made a practice of killing the wounded. It is almost needless to add that all the above statements are absolute falsehoods.

Inflamed and maddened by the telegrams of excitable correspondents, irritated by the prolongation of a war which had long passed its allotted span of six months, alarmed by the numerous disasters which we could only assign to malign influences the public began to clamour



for severity.<sup>1</sup> The unexpected difficulties which followed the occupation of Pretoria and the extraordinary activity of the Boers excited some of our advisers to further violence. The public was told that too much leniency had been shown, that war is not made with rose-water, and that a ruthless policy is in the long run the most merciful.<sup>2</sup> Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener were urged to proclaim a policy of "No quarter" and to "shoot at sight" as a rebel every Boer who fell into their hands.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Not only should he be slain, but slain with the same ruthlessness that they slay a plague-infected rat. Exeter Hall may shriek, but blood there will be, and plenty of it, and the more the better. The Boer resistance will further this plan and enable us to find that Imperial Great Britain is fiercely anxious for the excuse to blot out the Boers as a nation, to turn their land into a vast shambles, and remove their name from the muster-roll of South Africa."

<sup>2</sup> A well-known paper censured the mildness of Lord Roberts's policy and advised that the whole country should be cleared, and that women should be "transported or despatched." Many months ago, a correspondent in a well-known paper suggested, with editorial approval, that the war should be "smothered with women."

<sup>3</sup> A great journal in October, 1900, denied that the Boers in the field were entitled to the rights of combatants. They were brigands; and they were compared to the agrarian murderers in Ireland. It was stated that a point had now been reached when the services of the Provost Marshal were necessary, and when the prompt and ruthless punishment of every insurgent burgher caught *in delicto* was required.

About the same date another paper of enormous circulation demanded that all Boers caught with arms in their hands should be shot without mercy, and that a specific date should be proclaimed "after which every armed burgher should be treated as a rebel and shot."

A popular paper, commenting on the rumour that Lord Kitchener had issued orders that no quarter was to be given, remarked, "We should like to believe it. If the

of the abuse of the white flag.<sup>1</sup> But we must remember that the whole Boer population—high and

expansive bullet, was invented by us, and manufactured at Dum-Dum in India, to be used as an effective man-stopping bullet against the Afridis. On February 5th, 1898, Lord Stanley of Alderley, in the House of Lords, protested against the use of these bullets as being contrary to the methods of civilised warfare. They were, however, officially defended by the Government. In 1899 the dum-dum bullet was condemned as barbarous by the Hague Conference in spite of a defence by the English delegate. In consequence of this condemnation it was abandoned, and a new form of expansive bullet—Mark IV.—was adopted instead. On July 10, 1899, in the House of Commons, Mr. Wyndham admitted that this bullet was expansive, and that a supply had been sent out to the soldiers in South Africa. Owing to the protests of the Irish Members the Government promised that no more expansive bullets should be sent to South Africa. Unfortunately, several millions of these bullets were in use by our soldiers during the early stages of the war, and Lieutenant de Montmorency, R.A., in a letter dated May 31, 1900, states that from October 12, 1899, until January 15, 1900, the British forces to the north of Mafeking used nothing but Mark IV. ammunition, *i.e.*, expansive bullets. It is known that when our camp and all our ammunition at Dundee was captured by the Boers in October, 1899, it was found that the greater part of the bullets were Mark IV. The Webley expansive revolver bullet was in general use at Elandslaagte and elsewhere, until the War Office issued an order on March 28th, 1900, prohibiting its use "until further orders." It seems probable, therefore, that when Lord Roberts, on March 11th, 1900, protested against the use of uncivilised bullets, he was protesting to a certain extent against the British bullets which had been captured with our camp by the Boers at Dundee and other places.

<sup>1</sup> Very few instances of this can be definitely proved; and it is well known that where, as in a modern battle, the line of fighting is long and irregular, it is almost impossible for combatants at one end of the line to see the sign of surrender at the other. It may reasonably and fairly be allowed that in all wars such charges and recrimi-

low, virtuous and vicious—has been in the field, and every nation holds some villains. On the whole, the Boers have observed the honourable traditions of warfare. They have not shot our prisoners, they have not devastated our property, and nearly every piece of evidence which comes to us from a respectable quarter proves that if there is one virtue in the Boer character, it is their tender care of our wounded.<sup>1</sup>

It is significant that in very few cases have English soldiers been guilty of calumny towards

nations are frequent, that the greater number of such acts of apparent treachery are the results of a natural misunderstanding; and that most of them exist only in the imagination of those who did not see them.

<sup>1</sup> The following cases are characteristic of the heedless levity with which outrages are manufactured in South Africa :—

(1) The following Reuter telegram appeared in the *Times* weekly edition of February 15, 1900, under heading "The Military Situation" :—

"Krugersdorp, February 2nd.—It is stated that Dr. Walker, who was among the killed, had received three bullet wounds, but was finally despatched by a Boer, who battered in his skull with a stone.'

Captain H. G. Casson, South Wales Borderers, writing from Krugersdorp, under date March 14th denied the story absolutely, and stated that Dr. Walker was hit once only by a stray bullet, that he died the same afternoon from the natural effects of the wound, that every possible kindness was shown to the wounded by the Boers, and that the Boer general personally expressed his deep sorrow for the sad occurrence.

(2) In answer to Mr. Arthur Lee, who, on June 7, 1901, asked whether the Secretary of State for War had any official information with reference to the report published on the authority of a Reuter's telegram that a Royal Artillery officer and a non-commissioned officer were shot in cold blood by the Boers at Vlakkfontein for refusing to show the working of two guns temporarily captured from

a brave foe fighting against enormous odds.<sup>1</sup> Gallant and chivalrous Englishmen have not been backward in defending their stubborn adversaries. General Porter, who has recently returned from the front, bears this witness: "The Boers are a brave nation who fight gallantly and well. They have treated British prisoners with every consideration, and the wounded with the same care as they would their own. On a few occasions the white flag was abused, but in what large community would they not find a few miscreants?"<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Conan Doyle, who was with Lord Roberts during the early part of the war, speaks thus of the Boers:—

"Whatever else may be laid to the charge of the Boer, it can never be truthfully said that he is a coward or a man unworthy of the Briton's steel. Could we have such men as willing fellow-citizens, they are worth more than all the gold-mines of their country." Mr. Doyle has further said: "The Boers have been the cheap

our troops. Mr. Brodrick said—I have received a telegram from Lord Kitchener, and I am glad to say that the report is unfounded. On the other hand, it seems certain that one Boer at least despatched some of our wounded in this battle.

<sup>1</sup> It is well known that Lord Kitchener and his staff are indignant at the gross calumnies of some of the correspondents, many of which the Press censors have refused to pass.

<sup>2</sup> General Lyttelton, on July 1, 1901, at Hagley Hall, Stourbridge, replying to an address of welcome, remarked that nasty things had lately been said about incidents in the war, and he was sorry to say that nasty things had happened. But these things were not in accord with the Boer character. The Boers were brave men, and he did not think the atrocities that had been reported were the acts of the regular Dutch burghers, but of some of the riff-raff who got into armies.

victims of a great deal of cheap slander in the Press. The men who have seen most of the Boers in the field are the most generous in estimating their character. That the white flag was hoisted by the Boers as a cold-blooded device for luring our men into the open is an absolute calumny. To discredit their valour is to discredit our victory."

The wild and violent attacks on Christian De Wet have been unspeakably repugnant to reasonable and chivalrous Englishmen, whose indignation is aptly reflected in a letter to the *Times* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "It is time that a word was spoken in opposition to the idea that General Christian De Wet is a man of brutal and dishonourable character. Those who, like myself, have served in South Africa, fought against him, and frequently met men who have been prisoners under him, look, I believe, with shame and indignation on the attempts made to advertise and magnify such incidents as the alleged flogging and shooting of peace envoys, so as to blacken the character of a man who throughout the war held a reputation with our troops in the field of being not only a gallant soldier, but a humane and honourable gentleman. We may deplore the desperate tenacity of his resistance. Our duty and effort is to overcome it by 'smashing' him in the field. We gain nothing and only lose in self-respect by slandering him.

"His whole career gives the lie to such aspersions. It was in May of last year, ten months ago, that he first gained prominence. Since then he has fought scores of engagements with us, some successful, some unsuccessful, never with a suspicion of dishonourable conduct. He has had at one time or another some thousands of our men in his hands as prisoners of war. Many of them I have myself met. At second or third hand I have heard of the experiences of many others.

"I never heard a word against De Wet. When men suffered hardships they always agreed that they could not have been helped. But on the other hand I have heard many stories showing exceptional personal kindness in him over and above the reasonable degree of humanity

by Mr. Erskine Childers, who fought in the ranks of the City Imperial Volunteers.

Mr. Childers adds that the whole impression of the Boers received by the public in England is false, perhaps because it seems impossible to admire them without being thought to sympathise with them.

This testimony is amply supported by numerous letters from officers and private soldiers which have been published, in which the highest possible character has been given to De Wet on the score of his heroism and his chivalrous behaviour to our sick and wounded.

In the *Standard* of August 7, 1900 (p. 7), is given part of a letter<sup>1</sup> from Lieut.-Col. Stonham, "in command of the Imperial Yeomanry Hospital at the front," to Lady Georgiana Curzon. He had been taken prisoner at Roodeval, and gave his experience of what our papers call "Boer savagery."

which is expected in the treatment of prisoners of war.

"I believe this view of him is universal among our troops in South Africa. It makes one's blood boil to hear such a man called a brigand and a brute by civilian writers at home, who take as a text the reports of these solitary incidents, incomplete and one-sided as they are, and ignore—if, indeed, they know of it—the mass of testimony in his favour."

<sup>1</sup> "The Boers allowed us to take comforts, &c., from the station before they blew it up, but unfortunately a truck we had loaded was also blown up. General De Wet personally stated to me, when I went to his laager, how much he regretted the accident; and to compensate for it gave me fifty sheep, which he had sent his men to round up and drive into the camp. The Boers allowed us to keep all the tents of the 4th Derbys for our hospital use. They came the next day to see the wounded, and expressed to many of them, and to us, the regret they felt. General De Wet gave me a safe-conduct for any convoy we might wish

To the British army no more cruel insult can be offered than the advice that our prisoners of war should be shot<sup>1</sup> because the Boers refuse to abandon their struggle for freedom. The soldier knows the worth and valour of the enemy whom the civilian caluminates, and it is an unhappy compliment to our army to denounce as imbeciles and poltroons and marauding bands a foe which has held at bay for over eighteen months the greatest army England ever sent from her shores.

Most of the blunders which have characterised our South African policy during the last thirty years have resulted from want of sympathy and of accurate information. We have relied on blind guides and on prejudiced witnesses. The faults, and they are many, of the Dutch have been monstrously exaggerated: their virtues, and they have many, have been obscured. It is time that we try to understand the men who are fighting against us. We have determined to subdue them and to rule them, and, if we are to rule them with success, we must learn something of their nature. Understanding comes of knowledge, and there will be no peace for South Africa until the two races come to know one another. In the first

to send. . . . He also said he would give us timely warning of any impending action. . . . They gave us a written order, which I could show to any Boer approaching our camp, to the effect that none were to enter for fear of disturbing the sick. . . . I could mention many other instances of consideration we have received at their hands. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> Common sense may convert those whom chivalry does not influence. To put the matter on the lowest ground, if we were to shoot all Boer prisoners, we should lose more than we should gain. If De Wet and the other Boer generals had shot all our men who surrendered to

place, therefore, our foes are men of like passions with ourselves. The Boer officials of 1890-1899 are not proper examples of the Boer nation. They were corrupted by the cosmopolitan financiers of the Rand, and by the impact of a civilisation for which they were not ripe. In the Orange Free State—a state by universal admission almost perfect as a pastoral community—we might have found the Dutchman in his normal simplicity, untouched by the vicious associations of the mining town. The pastoral Boer resembles the Englishman of the countryside. He prefers being led to being driven; he answers to the whip by stubbornness, but to tact and sympathy with loyalty and devotion. He is the most stubborn of enemies, but the most faithful of friends; impressionable as a child, a hostile touch makes him strong and hard as adamant. Keen in business, he has an added dash of cunning which makes him a difficult partner. Born of a little nation whose fate it has been always to struggle for its existence against mighty foes, he is suspicious, perverse, and intractable.

The Boer women display a stubbornness and a courage equal to their husbands'. Herded together in prison camps, fed on scanty rations, and often parted from their children, they retain an invincible faith in the ultimate freedom of their race. "Go and fight," said a Boer woman to her husband; "I would rather see you dead, and all my children dead, than that you burghers should cease the struggle." These women are the mothers of the next generation. Is it wise that England should

them, we should have lost by this means alone from the beginning of November, 1900, to March, 1901, nearly two thousand English soldiers.



tempt them to nurse their children in bitter hatred of our race? <sup>1</sup>

The Europeans in South Africa haunt the towns; the Dutch people the country districts. The townsman, with quicker wits, despises the farmer; the farmer suspects the townsman.<sup>1</sup> The average Boer is very much like the average Englishman of country birth and agricultural surroundings; and a group of the better-class Boer farmers might be with difficulty distinguished from a group of English farmers. You have in the men themselves the same qualities, the same simplicity and frugality, the same perverseness and cunning, the same narrow views and suspicions, the same strong affections and strong prejudices, the same loyalty and the same tenacity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Miss Hobhouse's Report, quoted on p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> "The life that their fathers and grandfathers led does very well for them; they are content to live and die on their farms, content to live in rough comfort and to die with the assurance (not always forthcoming in these latter days) that those they leave behind will walk in their footsteps. Ambition is a thing they know nothing of; the advantages of wealth, and all that money can give to its possessor, do not seem to appeal one jot to the bulk of them. . . . If times are hard and comforts scarce, the Boer takes his bad fortune philosophically; next year may be a good one. His one desire in life seems to be not to be disturbed, to continue on the even tenor of his way without external interference. The busy strife, the eager competition, the unending nervous strain of modern civilisation, he regards with horror; his very soul rises up in revolt against it."—*Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Major Spencer Browne, a Queensland contingent officer, writes in the *Brisbane Courier*: "I never want to meet kinder, more hospitable and more comfortable people. True, some of them are poor and ignorant, but the general run of them live comfortably, rear their families well and with fair education. *They are the reverse of what we have*

It is a fashionable belief that all Dutchmen are lazy and retrograde, that they sleep in a waggon all day, and that their civilisation is mediæval. The extraordinary activity and hardihood of the Boers in war is sufficient to cast doubt on the charge of laziness, and it is a fact that nearly all the agricultural progress of South Africa is due to the Dutch; all the wheat and tobacco, and the vines, are grown by these worthless sluggards. The Orange Free State was a characteristic example of Dutch work, and it was a model for any Government in the world. From a desert it was made into a prosperous agricultural State; bridges and road were made; a complete system of national education was provided; while telegraphs and railways and an excellent judicature were a proof of a high order of civilisation.

That the Boers have ill-treated the natives is to a considerable extent true, but it is doubtful whether the native has fared worse at their hands than at the hands of their English masters.<sup>1</sup> To any South African a black man belongs to a lower order of humanity, or, to be quite frank, to no order of humanity; and those who know South Africa assert that the natives live longer with a Dutch master than with an Englishman, for though *been taught to consider them*. It will be a happy day for Australia when our pastoral country is settled by as fine a class of people."

<sup>1</sup> "They appeared to be under the impression that the Boers in the Transvaal were fierce and unjust aggressors, and that they dispossessed the natives of their territory, and brutally ill-treated them afterwards. He wished hon. members would read the papers before they came to this rash and inconsiderate conclusion. The absolute reverse of this was the fact."

MR. CHAMBERLAIN, 1881.

the former may treat them more harshly, his instinct or his experience gives him a greater success as a master.<sup>1</sup>

The radical fault of the Dutch in our eyes is that they dislike the English. But this is a fault which cannot be cured by a policy of abuse or dragooning; it is to be cured only by the lapse of time, by sympathy, and by the frank admission of high qualities in our opponents. The Dutch are less progressive than the English, and Dutch civilisation is undoubtedly behind the civilisation of England. But if we are wise we shall carry our thoughts back to the England of 1830, and remember that a great nation whose national existence was then to be counted by centuries was in constitutional and social reform far inferior to the Boer States of 1899.

There is one element in the Boer character of which we seem to have taken little account, though it has puzzled and irritated us. It was the spiritual factor which won Cromwell his triumphs, and which helped to win for the Americans their independence. It is the spiritual factor which has nerved the Boers against a great empire. That which is impossible to material force, spiritual strength, the ordered strength which comes of deep religious and patriotic fervour, can effect. The Boers are mystics, as were the Roundheads and the early colonists. Shrewd and active in the conduct

<sup>1</sup> It is a significant fact that among the enactments issued in March, 1901, by Lord Milner for the administration of the new Colonies, is one which ordains the punishment of Kaffirs by twelve to twenty-five lashes. It is true that this is a diminution of the number allowed by the old Transvaal law; but even at that it is so complete a flout

of their business, they pass much of their life in communion with the Unseen. Now a man who passes his whole life in such communion will make an erratic soldier; but he who to spiritual exaltation adds shrewd instinct and business capacity is a dangerous foe. The practical mystic is invincible by ordinary odds.

We are told that the Boers are hypocrites, and that their religion is a cloak of deceit. That statement may contain an element of truth, but as a generalisation it is false. We too often regard religious people as simpletons in business; and when we are worsted in a struggle by shrewd piety we resentfully suspect a fraud. But the implication is unfair, for why should a religious man be an imbecile?

Many Boers may be hypocritical, many are superstitious; but the Boer race is religious with a simple fervour and an unsophisticated creed.<sup>1</sup> Their life under the lonely stars and silent hills gives their thoughts a solemn colour which is absent from the minds of those who dwell in populous cities. Our soldiers who know them well, and who have been their prisoners in this war, bear witness that their religion, austere and hard as it is, is part of

to our humanitarian pretences that on Aug. 1, 1901, Mr. Chamberlain, in the House of Commons, declared his desire to have flogging abolished.

<sup>1</sup> Captain Reichman, who was the United States *attaché* with the Boer forces during the earlier period of this war, says that during the seven months he was with the Boers, he never saw a drunken Boer and never heard a profane word from one. On the halt, or in camp, the Boers read the Bible or sang hymns. At night groups would join in singing Psalms. The religious sentiment predominated in everything.

their nature and of their life. The hymns they have sung over our buried dead are no empty lip-service, but the sincere utterances of brave men who feel the sense of tears in human things, and can swiftly pass from the stern horrors of the battlefield to communion with their Maker. To call such men hypocrites is to insult humanity.

Their history, written in tears and blood, will be an eternal inspiration to generous minds. In an age when the ideal has little influence and little value, they have struggled for the sake of freedom against overwhelming odds for nearly two years. They have seen their wives carried into captivity, their children dying, their homes burnt, their property confiscated; but they have not flinched. When peace and the ordered ease of English rule were offered them if only they would forswear their country, they refused the temptation and were strong to fight on. Are we not chivalrous enough to acknowledge that these men are heroes and worthy of our steel and our regard? Let us, in Burke's noble phrase, confess that we *do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.*

We, whose pulses have thrilled at the heroic story of our own land, we who have wept over Poland and Hungary, can we not spare a sigh for the long agony of this unhappy race? Rough and unlettered they may be, but they have given us an example of high and splendid faith; and when the day of our own Armageddon comes, we shall utter no better prayer than to face our destiny with a courage as dauntless and serene.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA

**I**T is no travesty of the utterances of the capitalist party to say that to them the Transvaal takes the form of a huge mining and land company. They issue a prospectus in which they offer to the British public "the most splendid territory in the world," a land full of gold and diamonds, iron and coal, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land yielding rich crops of wheat, where flocks and herds multiply, where generous nature fills the lap of the prosperous settler with richness and plenty. The promoters of this company point to the eminence of the Board of Directors, where sit many financiers and politicians whose genius is undisputed.

If a sceptical inquirer objects that the expenditure has been excessive, the promoters may allow that it is somewhat high. It is true that the maintenance and protection and development of the new possessions will cost twice as much as the possession for many years will yield. It is true that the struggle to obtain it will cost £200,000,000 and perhaps 20,000 lives, and the desolation of a country as large as France, and

the permanent hatred of more than half of our fellow-subjects in Cape Colony, and more disasters than an English army has ever suffered. But England is rich and can afford to pour out her money like water; the disasters are "incidents"; and as to loss of life and loyalty, these are "irrelevant" <sup>1</sup> and mere trifles compared with Prestige. The unhappy public is convinced, the capitalists float their company, and England pays her £200,000,000 and 20,000 lives and her bitter humiliation.

The basis of statesmanship is common sense, and common sense requires that we should examine carefully the glittering prospects which are held out to us. On a calm consideration they lose something of their glamour. The fortunes of South Africa are determined by its physical character and nature, and it is not likely that where this factor is a permanent one, progress can be much more rapid than in the past. Agriculture, in the strict sense of the word, is impossible over the greater part of the country. Much of the land is practically desert, the rainfall is irregular, and the climate dry. Without an elaborate system of irrigation, it will be quite impossible to grow more than enough corn to satisfy the wants of the South African population.

The difficulties of agriculture have driven farmers to devote their attention to the rearing of cattle and sheep. Most of the farms are very large, and some are enormous in size, covering as many as sixteen thousand acres, while many of the Dutch farmers have a very large stock of animals; but the pasture is thin and droughts are frequent.

<sup>1</sup> Mr Chamberlain in the House of Commons.

be, a country of a few very rich men and of many poor men. The Europeans who make their fortune will probably return to Europe to spend it, and there seems little likelihood of an immigration and a permanent settlement of white people on a large scale.

The country is at present practically a wilderness, with a certain number of towns of varying size and importance. These towns are for the most part the centres of the English population, while the Dutch monopolise the agricultural districts and appear to be the only class of the people both able and willing to till the soil and to live the lonely lives of cattle rearers. Thus while the inhabitants of the towns are migratory, the agricultural population is permanent in its nature.

To sum up, the immediate future of South Africa, so far as we can estimate at present, belongs to the trading and mining communities; but when the gold mines are exhausted (and the traders of the towns will be the first to feel the withdrawal of foreign capital), the centre of gravity will again reside in the population of the country districts. In fifty or sixty years we may expect to see the Dutch population considerably exceeding the number of the English settlers, and as it is a population which will steadily grow and is homogeneous in character, it will exercise a preponderant influence in politics. Unless we conciliate that population, we are laying up for our successors a heritage of trouble.



## CHAPTER VII

### LORD MILNER

FEW things in the last two years have been witnessed more melancholy than the failure of Lord Milner. His appointment to his great office was greeted with universal praise; it was thought that one held in such affectionate regard by so many eminent men could not but justify that regard, that a past so brilliant was an omen of easy and happy success. He had shown high qualities in Egypt and at the Board of Inland Revenue. He had earned the reputation of a skilful administrator; and it was said that under the charm of his manner reposed the strength of character, the insight, and the discretion which South Africa demands of her rulers.

How utterly these happy auguries have been falsified the world now knows. It sees that the Viceroy, who was sent out to secure peace and contentment to South Africa and to hold the balance between the English and the Dutch, has made every Dutchman disloyal and has been the chief agent in the inception of the most bitter and disastrous war which England has waged for one hundred and twenty years.

We have always relied too much on the testi-

mony of our officials in South Africa, and it would be well for us to take to heart Lord Palmerston's warning against "the man who has been there," the man who knows nothing of the history, habits, or prejudices of those whom he rules. There have been many unwise and few wise rulers in South Africa. Nearly all have been high-minded, nearly all have been imprudent; but no one save Lord Milner has become to the Dutch an object of personal hostility. Even Sir Bartle Frere, in 1881, did not lose the private regard and respect of the Dutch in Cape Colony.<sup>1</sup>

Sent out to govern as the constitutional representative of a constitutional monarchy two races between whom the unhappy events of 1895 had raised a barrier of suspicion and anger, he speedily became the partisan of the extreme Loyalist party.

<sup>1</sup> Twenty years ago Mr. Chamberlain demanded the recall of Sir Bartle Frere in language curiously fitting to the present situation; "No one can doubt the energy of the High Commissioner—he has energy, and to spare. Indeed, it would have been better for our South African dominions if he had been a little less energetic. I will not for a moment presume to doubt the ability of the High Commissioner. In other positions he has shown it, and in other positions may still show it, in the service of the Crown. I will admit also that he is a man of high integrity of purpose and great conscientiousness; but these qualities only make him the more dangerous, because ability misdirected is more fatal than ignorance itself. The conscientiousness of the High Commissioner can only lead to one conclusion, that he is not likely to change opinions he has deliberately formed, and which he has so frankly expressed. It has been suggested that continued confidence must be placed in him in order that he may bring the present difficulties to a satisfactory conclusion. But I cannot see the logic of that argument. I think that the man who has unnecessarily raised these difficulties is the least likely person now to allay them."

High-minded, patriotic, and absolutely sincere, Lord Milner has been unable to resist the sinister influences of South Africa, and the unhappy result has come about that by nearly every Dutch subject of His Majesty he is regarded with bitter hatred. Can we regard without alarm his retention in a land where the Dutch form the predominant factor in the population?

The secret of Lord Milner's failure lies obviously in the want of sympathy and imagination which are necessary to the great ruler. Born and, during his early years, educated in Germany, he must have imbibed the influences of German ideas and methods. Admirable as those methods often are, they are bureaucratic and in their essence autocratic. Repugnant to a multitude of Germans, they are utterly unsuitable to the management of a free and stubborn people. Lord Milner's tenure of office in Egypt and at Somerset House was not likely to liberalise his views. We hold Egypt, frankly, by force, and though our rule has been an unmixed blessing to the fellaheen, it is not reasonable to deduce from that fact the conclusion that the same methods will be suitable to the government of a race so obstinate and suspicious as the Dutch.

Another factor in the formation of Lord Milner's character was his experience on the staff of a popular paper. His despatches, admirably written and interesting as they often are, offer a clear example of the advantages and dangers of such an education. They were evidently composed to meet the public eye and to excite public indignation. They are full of excellent phrases, they are moving and eloquent; but in their

appeal to an immediate audience and to popular prejudices, in their partisanship, in their impatience, in their fatal fluency, in their lack of proportion, and in their shortness of view, they are the work of an able journalist rather than the documents of a statesman whose strength is quietness and confidence, and who is content to see in the future the perfect fruition of his patient wisdom.

Lord Milner, therefore, accomplished and able as he is, approached his task under the grave disadvantages of his official training, of his strong prepossessions in favour of strict rule and order, and of a sincere belief that a firm and unyielding policy was alone fitted to meet the urgency of the situation. To these causes we must attribute the grievous errors and strange indiscretions that have marked the career of this brilliant but unhappy Viceroy.

By Lord Milner's own confession<sup>1</sup> the Dutch in Cape Colony were absolutely loyal to the Queen when in 1897 he entered on his office. But in two years he and Mr. Chamberlain had changed all that. In 1898 he had made up his mind that a large number of the Dutch were disloyal and in treasonable sympathy with the Boers of the Transvaal and the Free State. He met with impatience their expressions of loyalty to the throne.<sup>2</sup> He accused their papers of sedi-

<sup>1</sup> See note, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> "Of course, I am glad to be assured that any section of Her Majesty's subjects are loyal, but I should be much more glad to be allowed to take that for granted. Why should I not? What reason could there be for disloyalty? You have thriven wonderfully under that Government. . . . Well, gentlemen, of course you are loyal. It would be monstrous if you were not. I am familiar at home with

tion,<sup>1</sup> and told their deputations that they were the tools of unscrupulous politicians,<sup>2</sup> and that he would no longer submit to the political ascendancy of the Africander party.

In his relations with the Transvaal Government he seemed bent on a policy of force. We have seen how, instructed as he was by Mr. Chamberlain to discuss with Mr. Kruger the problems of the situation in a conciliatory manner, he declined to touch on any other question but that of the franchise, and abruptly closed the door on further negotiations. He had persuaded himself that nothing would bring the Boers to their senses but threatening language and the prospect of armed intervention. His despatches to Mr. Chamberlain,

the figure of the politician, often the best of men, though singularly injudicious, who, whenever any dispute arises with another country, starts with the assumption that his own country must be in the wrong. He is not disloyal, but, really, he cannot be very much surprised if he appears so to those of his fellow-citizens whose inclination is to start with the exactly opposite assumption" (March 5, 1898). The Loyalist Press alluded to this speech as "a splendid sarcasm."

<sup>1</sup> "A certain section of the Press, not in the Transvaal only, preaches openly and constantly the doctrine of a Republic embracing all South Africa, and supports it by menacing references to the armaments of the Transvaal, its alliance with the Orange Free State, and the active sympathy which, in case of war, it would receive from a section of Her Majesty's subjects. I regret to say that this doctrine, supported, as it is, by a ceaseless stream of malignant lies about the intentions of the British Government, is producing a great effect on a large number of our Dutch fellow-colonists" (May 5, 1899).

Lord Milner could produce no proof of this statement except the letter of an anonymous correspondent of an obscure paper, the *Stellalander*.

<sup>2</sup> See Benjamin Franklin on English Governors, p. 15.

and more particularly the famous cablegram of May 4, 1899, in which he called aloud for a display of force and a "striking proof" of firmness, leave no doubt that this idea had become fixed and rooted in his mind. We are not therefore surprised to know that he made light of the entreaties of the leaders of the Dutch party in Cape Colony, and practically suppressed them at the crucial moment.<sup>1</sup> There is no word or hint of conciliation in his despatches, no attempt to stay a conflict which he knew full well might bring ruin on South Africa. At the Bloemfontein Conference he avowedly did not believe in a peaceful settlement. Later he loudly called for war.

Unless he has misstated his own course,<sup>2</sup> his aim from the beginning was to crush the Transvaal and to place it under the British flag. The reform of the franchise and the grievances of the Outlanders were a mere diplomatic pretext, and the determination of the British Government and public was "from the first, to make an end of this business once and for all, to make South Africa one country under one flag."<sup>2</sup> At the end

<sup>1</sup> In his telegram of August 31st he says that "the purport of *all* representations made to me is to urge prompt and decided action." Yet three days before Mr. Schreiner, the Premier, had declared in the Cape Parliament: "We feel that war would be wrong; . . . it would be an offence against civilisation." It is only fair to add that when, on July 4, 1899, Mr. Chamberlain asserted, in reply to Mr. Ellis, that no communication had been made by the Cape Government to him through the High Commissioner, the fact was otherwise. Mr. Chamberlain explained next day that he meant "no *formal* representations." As a matter of fact, the High Commissioner had communicated, though grudgingly, some strong representations made to him by Mr. Schreiner a few weeks before.

In his farewell speech at Capetown, May 7, 1901. See p. 98.

of August, 1899, as we said, when it was clear that Mr. Chamberlain was inclined to accept the proposals of the Transvaal Government, the High Commissioner, dreading a weakening of the Ministerial policy, despatched the following telegram: "*BRITISH South Africa is prepared for extreme measures*, and is ready to suffer much in order to see the vindication of British authority. A prolongation of negotiations and indecisive result is dreaded, and I fear there will be a strong reaction of feeling against the policy of Her Majesty's Government if matters drag." It is possible to argue that Lord Milner's policy was wise; it is possible to argue that it was unwise. Two facts, at any rate, are clear: he was the advocate of war, and, as the first word of the above telegram proves, he had become the partisan of the Loyalist party.

Lord Milner had almost from the first decided that the salvation of South Africa lay with the Loyalist party. It was a belief honestly held, but it has been fatal in its results. Its first effect was to persuade the Dutch that the Governor-General was a partisan, and that there was no hope of fair treatment from him or from the Government whose representative he was. Its second effect was to throw the Viceroy into the hands of the Loyalist party, which, as we have seen, was a political party, representing the smaller part of the population of Cape Colony. Having once made his choice, he could not without difficulty recede from his position. We have seen that most of the English newspapers published in South Africa were the property of the financial group who had organised the Jameson

and unwearied application of Mr. Grenville, to his generous ambition and his admirable and laborious life. But the fixed methods and forms of office had not tended to liberalise Grenville's mind.

"It may be truly said that men too much conversant with office are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms in which it is conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order; but when the high roads are broken up, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite, than ever office gave or than office can ever give."

The career of such men as Grenville is not seldom a tragedy. Dowered with every gift that seems necessary to win success in life—a keen intellect and a winning manner, high culture and patriotic ardour—they yet lack the one quality which gives the temple its corner-stone. They are without that union of sympathy and imagination and discretion and unerring instinct which marks the great ruler and the great statesman. Precise and orderly in their intellectual methods, and always able to frame a brilliant defence of a ruinous policy, they have every knowledge but the knowledge of the human heart. In a time



of peace and order they prove themselves dignified and able leaders of men, but when passions run high and the conflicting claims of race and interest cry loudly for solution, they are bewildered and dismayed. They lose their sense of proportion. Criticism becomes for them an impertinence, opposition a treachery, The whisper of disorder angers and terrifies them ; cunning advisers hint that their dignity and the safety of the empire are being compromised ; they tell them that a "strong policy" will stay the coming anarchy. Every step they take makes return more difficult and more perilous, and at last they find themselves confronted by dangers with which they have not the strength to fight. Then, weary and baffled, they throw themselves into the arms of the class which flatters them. They have become partisans, and all the good qualities of their character—their love of decency and order, their culture and simplicity, their devotion to their country—become instruments of their ruin. In bitter remorse they see around them the desolation of which they have been the unwilling agents, and the men whom by their unwisdom they have driven into sedition and war rise up and curse them.

It is now clear that at last Lord Milner recognises the tragical failure of his policy. Seldom in English history has a statesman been forced to describe in terms so discouraging<sup>1</sup> the despair of the present and the ominous prospects of the future. If Lord Milner could start again with the knowledge which painful experience has brought

<sup>1</sup> Lord Milner's despatch of February 6, 1901.

him, he would probably take a different road, and he would certainly not take with him the companions who have led him into his grievous indiscretions. But the errors of the past may be the errors of the future, and difficulties almost as great await him in the new possessions which his policy has added to the Empire and of which he has been appointed the Governor. He, the chief agent of their misery and their conquest, has to rule men who will never forget and never forgive—men whom it will be impossible to convince of his justice or of his mercy or of his truth. Is it wise that we should place him there? Is it wise that he, of his own will, should be there?

The proportion of responsibility we must assign to the Colonial Secretary and to the Viceroy at present we can only guess and we may never fully know, but Lord Milner will at all events bear a heavy burden. The position which he has filled has indeed been one of extraordinary delicacy, and it is one which only a man of genius could have filled with success. But it is a sound and useful rule that where a community, large or small—a nation, regiment, or school—sinks to disorder and anarchy, the guilt shall fall on the ruler rather than on the ruled. If a surgeon, after a wrong diagnosis, amputates a sound limb, we are not disposed to pardon his error because his intentions were good or his difficulties great. We look to each man to carry out successfully the special duty that is ordained of him, and it is the duty of a statesman to succeed. Circumstances may extenuate his error, but they cannot excuse his failure or justify his retention.

We are too near the events to judge serenely. History will weigh the facts and sift the evidence and assign the responsibility, and it may be she will decide that across the dark stage of South Africa there has passed no figure more interesting, more pathetic, and more ineffectual for good.

## CHAPTER VIII

### UNREST, OR GOVERNMENT WITHOUT CONSENT

**T**HERE are now only two courses open to us. We must either crush the Boers and compel their submission, or we must offer them such terms as they will accept. The first is the policy of Mr. Chamberlain. The second policy is obviously favoured by Lord Kitchener.

It is certain that we can, if we are unwise, enforce unconditional submission. By this policy the separate national existence of the two Republics is annihilated; they completely lose their independence and they become a subject race held down by arms. When the Boers have been utterly defeated, they are to be governed by military rule for a period of time the length of which shall depend upon their good behaviour. If the Boers show themselves obedient and well-behaved subjects, military rule will be quickly followed by a period of Crown Colony Government.

This method of government, though not military in its character, is absolutely autocratic, and will be imposed upon the two annexed provinces for a term of years which, as before, will depend

upon the good behaviour of the conquered peoples. Finally, when the Boers have shown by their acts and their promises that they are loyal subjects of the British Empire, representative institutions will be granted to them, and they will be allowed to take their place as separate provinces of a confederated South African Dominion, owning allegiance to the British Crown.

To those who know the character of South Africans, whether they be Dutch or whether they be English, the mere statement of this policy carries its own condemnation. The folly of such a scheme is not only ludicrous but tragical. Unwilling submission will be temporary and fatal: we cannot hold South Africa without the consent of the Dutch. England has had little experience in ruling by military force a disloyal white population. Nor is the case of Ireland analogous, for Ireland has a safety-valve through her representatives in the British Parliament, and the position of Ireland makes it possible for us to flood the country at a day's notice with a mass of soldiery.

In the first place, the Boers will be the most difficult of subjects. We heard eighteen months ago that the result of this war would be a reconciliation between the two races, that the Boers would learn to respect us, and that they would accept from us the right hand of fellowship. That was an estimate which might have been made by sanguine people at the beginning of the war, but it is not an estimate which can now be made by the most optimistic. The Boers, beaten only by overwhelming numbers and after a superb struggle, will know that the moral victory is theirs. Their pride will not be quenched. The war, too, has had many of the features of a

civil war, and on the part of the Boers it has been a war waged by the whole body of their citizens against a professional army. Where the population of a country unites to defend its territory and its independence, a bitter national feeling is excited which, whether victory or defeat await the citizens, will not be allayed for generations. The last eighteen months, if they have taught us anything, have taught us that there is in the Dutch nature an invincible passion for freedom, a deep repugnance to the rule of an alien, however generous and enlightened. It is vain to denounce such stubbornness. It exists, and with it we must reckon. The Boer character will never wholly assimilate with the English, and our only hope must be that the two races may come to accept what is best in each other, and to overlook that part which is unpleasant to them.

The memories of this unhappy war will never fade from the minds of the Dutch. If we can picture to ourselves England swept from end to end by hostile forces, her towns ravaged, her villages destroyed, her farms burnt, her women and children hurried from their homes into prison camps; if we can imagine one tithe of the physical pain, the mental agony, and the undying bitterness which such a war in our own country would engender in our own minds, we shall be able to understand in some faint degree the depth and strength of the passionate hatred which the Boers of the two Republics will for many a year feel against their English invaders.

During the period of military rule, we shall have to keep in subjection not only the Boers but the capitalists and the population of the goldfields. It

is quite certain that we shall not be able to reduce the burden of taxation which Mr. Kruger imposed on the mines, and it is probable that this burden will be under our rule considerably increased. We shall have to raise heavy taxes throughout the provinces, and as few of the Dutch will pay these taxes except under compulsion, and as many of the English and the foreign inhabitants of Johannesburg may after a time display a similar unwillingness, we may have to collect these taxes at the point of the bayonet—we who went to war that the bright rays of freedom might illumine these sullen lands. The English and foreign mining population will, if we can trust the lessons of history, bear with ill grace the vexatious exercise of military authority, and it is by no means incredible that we shall create among the European and American inhabitants a hatred of our rule as bitter as the hatred we have inspired in the Dutch.

We will, however, assume that peace is maintained, and that we permit the population to enter upon the second period—the period of Crown Colony government. The conditions of this form of government are not obvious to men who have never been under the sway of an alien Power; and though it will be accepted by the foreign element as an improvement on the military period, it is certain that the rule of Downing Street will be almost as vexatious as the administration of soldiers. Those who have examined the difficult problems of our colonial system are aware that no danger which has threatened the safety of our colonial empire is so acute as the danger we have suffered through the incompetence and narrow obstinacy of our official classes. To a colonial, whether he be an

Australian or a New Zealander, a Canadian or an African or West Indian, the name of Downing Street is typical of the worst faults of bureaucratic government, and the slightest suspicion that this hateful instrument is likely to interfere in the government of his country will turn at once the most loyal colonist into the most bitter malcontent.

The English Ministers will, during this period as during the last, find in the capitalists as difficult and probably as dangerous a foe as in the Dutch. The mine-owners and managers, most of whom are foreigners, will care nothing about the administration or the safety of the country in so far as it does not concern their own definite interest. They will be daily pressing upon the English Ministry the necessity of regulating native labour, and fixing by law a price for such labour, and of importing even against their will natives from the surrounding countries. English Ministers will hesitate to sanction and enforce a system which has little to distinguish it from slavery; but in their perplexity, fearing on the one side the disloyalty of the Dutch, and on the other the hostility of the mine-owners, the English Government may find itself obliged to cultivate the friendship of the capitalists in order to secure the quiet of the country.

Finally, the period of representative institutions will arrive. It is impossible for England to govern a white population for any length of time by other than constitutional methods. Russia might succeed, or Germany; but England's traditions and her sympathy with freedom are too powerful to allow her for ever to dragoon white men into submission. Ultimately, public opinion in Great Britain will assert itself, and constitutional privi-



leges will be granted to the Dutch in the two annexed Republics.

We shall then be met by an obvious but painful dilemma. If it is true that in fifty or sixty years the Dutch population in these two States will outnumber or be equal to the English population, if the passion for freedom which animates the Dutch to-day retains its vigour, it is probable that the Boers will endeavour by constitutional means to secure their complete independence. We shall either be compelled to assent to any demands which the Dutch race may choose to make, or to refuse to yield to those demands. In the latter case, we shall be forced back to the odious remedies of military coercion, and shall find ourselves again obliged to hold down two great territories with an armed force.

But the cardinal objection to the subjugation of the two Republics and to the absolute loss of their independence will be its disastrous effect upon the loyalty of the Dutch in Cape Colony. The danger which, above all others, an English Ministry should avoid is that of consolidating the whole Dutch population of South Africa by enforcing upon them a grievance of race and blood. The sympathy of the Cape Dutch with the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State is not political but racial. The same blood flows in their veins, they are related by ties of marriage and kinship, and the sympathy which they feel for two peoples of the same race is the sympathy which Englishmen would feel under the same conditions for men of their blood threatened with annihilation by a great Power. The Dutch colonists had not shown before the Jameson raid any violent sympathy with the Transvaal ; on the

contrary, they had displayed considerable hostility towards the political defects of the Boer Government. They recognised too well the advantages of their position as an English Colony to wish to join their political fortunes with those of the Transvaal.

There is then among the Colonial Dutch a passionate feeling of racial sympathy with the men of their own blood in the two Republics, and all their leaders assure us, in language of solemn warning, that the Cape Dutch will never rest until the Dutch in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State enjoy, if only to a limited extent, the independence which is the breath of their life. So long as the Dutch of the two provinces are held down as a subject and conquered race, their position will unite the whole Dutch population of South Africa, and will create a most dangerous disaffection throughout its length and breadth. We shall then govern, not only a hostile people in the annexed Republics, but a more numerous and equally hostile people in Cape Colony. Through their representatives the Cape Dutch will be able to press steadily for a reversal of our policy, and to take advantage of our weakness and its opportunities. We cannot permanently ignore the demands of a Cape Parliament, in which the Dutch may be supreme, and we shall either have to grant these demands or to suspend free institutions. The certain outcome of such a policy would be rebellion and civil war. On the other hand, if we allow the Boers to retain their own laws and customs and representative institutions, we shall divert the sympathy of our colonists, who, embittered no longer by the subjugation of their kinsmen across the Orange and the Vaal, will return again to their own political interests.

The military effects of a policy of unconditional submission will be disastrous. To hold, without the consent of its inhabitants, a country so desolate, so barren, so vast, so sparsely populated, and so hostile, will be impossible by any other than a great military force. England will be obliged to build forts at frequent intervals through the whole country; she will have to maintain in the two Republics an army of 40,000 men in addition to a police force of 10,000 men; and the presence of these troops, and the inevitable friction which will ensue between the Dutch and English officials,<sup>\*</sup> will keep alight a fire which any sudden violence on our part or any European complication would fan into inextinguishable flame. Two results at least will follow. A first and immediate result will be an increase in our standing army, together with an enormous increase in our expenditure and in our burden of taxation. It will be impossible for us to maintain an armed force of 50,000 men in South Africa and to maintain, on the old establishment, troops sufficient to guard India and our vast interests at home and abroad. There will be a demand on the part of our war party for conscription or for some form of compulsory service. That the English nation will permit such service, except under the stress of foreign invasion, is hard to believe; and when the time comes to choose between conscription and a conciliatory attitude in South Africa, there is little reason to doubt that it will be able to make its choice without

<sup>\*</sup> What happened after the first annexation is a portent of what must happen after a second. And now the risks are immeasurably greater.

hesitation. If, on the other hand, we yield to the clamour of the military party, we shall slowly drop behind in that race for national and commercial pre-eminence in which even now it is difficult to preserve our place.<sup>1</sup> South Africa will drain our strength; we shall lose power and opportunity: we shall bleed to weakness if not to exhaustion.

In addition to the political and military difficulties, there will arise a financial problem of great magnitude. One of the many illusions from which we are slowly awaking is the expectation that we shall be able to recover a considerable portion of the cost of the war from the two Republics. This illusion was partly based on the hope that a war of three months would find the Boers at our mercy; but there are still many men sanguine enough to hope that even after eighteen months of warfare we may still be able quickly to relieve the English taxpayer from a portion of his burden. This hope must now be abandoned.<sup>2</sup> The two Republics cannot for many years, and perhaps will never, bear any considerable share of the cost of the war. This statement is a strong one and

<sup>1</sup> The money which we have spent in South Africa to no purpose would suffice to equip in every first-rate and second-rate town in Great Britain a technical institution which might have been invaluable to us in our commercial struggle.

<sup>2</sup> Sir David Barbour, who was sent by the Government to the Transvaal to report on the financial situation and on the prospects of a contribution from the annexed territories, in a report in which the optimism of the official struggles with the clear sight of the man of affairs, states that the Free State will furnish nothing towards the cost of the war and that the Transvaal, having been brought to the verge of ruin, will not be able to contribute anything for at least two ears. (Blue Book S. Africa Cd. 628, June, 1901.)

will be a shock to optimists. But we cannot by optimism evade plain facts, and a recital of such facts will be sufficient to demolish the pathetic hopes of the English taxpayer.

In the first place, though it is at present impossible to estimate accurately the cost of the war, we know that in round figures the present expenses of the campaign vary between £1,750,000 and £2,000,000 a week.<sup>\*</sup> If we assume that the war is to be ended only by the complete submission of the Boers, and if we also assume that such a submission cannot be secured in less than two years from the commencement of the war, we shall obtain an aggregate cost of £180,000,000. This estimate is a very low one, and it is probable that when the whole expenses of the war are computed they will amount to £200,000,000, while if the war lasts for more than two years, the total cost may be £250,000,000 or £300,000,000.

The two Republics have been devastated, and very many of the farms in the Orange Free State and in the Transvaal have been burnt and destroyed. Many of the smaller towns in the two States have also been sacked, some have been burned; many dams have been destroyed, and the few irrigation works which existed in the country have probably been ruined. It will be necessary for us, if we are to govern

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Brodrick, in June, 1901, stated that the cost of the war had been lately reduced from £1,500,000 to £1,250,000 a week. But official estimates are always optimistic and generally wrong. The official estimate of the Afghan war of 1881 was £6,000,000; the cost was over £18,000,000. We may safely add 15 per cent. to the estimates of our officials.

the country properly, to restore to it its agricultural and its industrial prosperity. It will be impossible to feed the inhabitants of the large towns without the aid of an agricultural population. We shall have therefore to rebuild and restock the farms which we have burnt, to redeem them from the Jew mortgagors who will foreclose on the ruined Boers, and to supply capital to the Boer farmers whom we replace on their farms. If we confiscate these farms and are able to find Englishmen to succeed the Boer owners, we shall be obliged to supply such men with even greater capital. It will also be necessary to take in hand large irrigation works, and to develop the country by a network of railways and by other necessary but expensive methods. This work of restoration will involve us in a very large expenditure. To rebuild the farms, to supply capital to the old or the new farmers, to develop the country by irrigation and railways and to compensate those of our own colonists who have suffered in this war, will cost us £15,000,000.<sup>1</sup> We thus arrive at a capital sum of at least £200,000,000, or it may be £250,000,000, which sum will fall entirely on the English taxpayer unless we are able to lay part of the burden on the resources of the Transvaal and the Free State. It is necessary, therefore, to examine these resources.

In 1898 the total revenue which the Transvaal was able to raise was, in round figures, £4,000,000, while the expenditure amounted to the same sum. Of this sum probably half a million was spent in armaments, and we may therefore assume that

<sup>1</sup> I have reduced this sum from the £25,000,000 of the first edition. See p. 203, Note 1.

the civil administration of the country and its various services cost £3,500,000.

The following is the financial statement of the Transvaal for 1898:—

## RECEIPTS.

Fines, &c. ... ..	£90,713
Hut and native tax ... ..	110,182
Import duties ... ..	1,066,994
Interest ... ..	254,991
Licences ... ..	174,383
Postal Department (including telegraphs)...	206,331
Prospecting licences ... ..	322,748
Revenue, Netherlands Railway ... ..	668,951
Sale of explosives ... ..	158,973
Stamp dues ... ..	285,383
State royalty on dynamite ... ..	67,711
Stand licences ... ..	60,004
Transfer dues ... ..	125,439
Other revenue ... ..	390,757

£3,983,560

## EXPENDITURE.

Education ... ..	£202,831
Fixed salaries ... ..	1,080,382
Hospitals ... ..	88,952
Import duties ... ..	316,426
Interest ... ..	151,146
Diggers' and Prospectors' licences (owners' portion) ... ..	178,203
Police and prisons ... ..	80,963
Purchase of properties ... ..	140,310
Public works ... ..	535,502
Special expenditure ... ..	211,911
Sundry services ... ..	148,874
Swaziland expenditure ... ..	148,961
Telegraph Department ... ..	92,022
War Department ... ..	357,225
Other expenditure ... ..	237,765

£3,971,473

Surplus ... .. 12,087

The normal revenue of the Orange Free State was latterly about £650,000, and the expenditure was about £450,000.

It is difficult and almost impossible to determine whether some of the items of the Transvaal expenditure are extravagant, and whether some of the receipts may not be increased under British administration. In particular, the revenue derived from the Netherlands Railway Company will probably show an increase if we exercise the powers of expropriation which the late Transvaal Government possessed. It is possible that the Transvaal spent on its war department more than £357,000, and we may assume that the extra expenditure has been concealed in some of the other items. But it is difficult to see how the expenses of a Government ruling a huge territory can be materially reduced in any direction except in that of military supplies, and it is quite certain that many of the expenses will be considerably increased. The administration of the Transvaal was inefficient, and even bad, but it was cheap. It did not employ a host of officials, and the salaries paid were not in the aggregate high.

Putting on one side extravagant expenditure and the amount expended on armaments, we may assume that the cost of government of the Transvaal and the Free State did not in any year exceed £4,000,000; and it is well known that British administration, though efficient, is costly. Whether the new provinces be under military rule or Crown Colony government or representative government, it is probable that the number of officials will be greater than the number of Boer officials, and that the aggregate amount of their salaries and



of the general cost of administration will exceed by at least one-fourth the expense of the former civil administration of the Transvaal and the Free State. We may safely assume, therefore, that the civil administration of the Transvaal and the Free State conducted according to English methods will cost not less than £5,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

When the submission of the Boers is enforced there will be a force of mounted police of 10,000 men. The pay of this police is very high, and amounts on an average to £200 a year for each man. Its expenses, including extra allowances, rations, horses,<sup>2</sup> and equipment for the

<sup>1</sup> In order that I may not be charged with exaggeration, I have reduced the £6,000,000 of the first edition by £1,000,000. But I am inclined to hold the first estimate correct.

The following are the figures of Revenue and Expenditure for 1899 of five representative British Colonies :

COLONY.	REVENUE.	EXPENDITURE.
Cape Colony .....	£8,781,212	£8,190,124
Natal .....	£2,081,349	£1,914,724
New South Wales .....	£9,572,912	£9,553,237
South Australia.....	£2,665,477	£2,632,840
New Zealand.....	£4,930,129	£5,386,989

<sup>2</sup> Horse-sickness is one of the greatest plagues of South Africa, and it has been estimated by a writer in the *African Review* of January 5, 1901, that the average mortality among the horses in our army of occupation will be at least 75 per cent. Even if we assume that this estimate is exaggerated, and reduce it to 50 per cent., the result is startling. Assuming that the police force requires 30,000 horses, of these 15,000 will die every year, and, valuing these at £20 each, the annual cost to the Government in horses alone will be £300,000. Moreover, owing to the risks of grass food, the Government will have to feed at least half its horses on forage, and, allowing £2 per month per horse for this item, we arrive at an additional expense of £360,000. The total expense of the 30,000 horses alone will be £660,000 per annum.

rank and file, and allowing for the high cost of all necessities of life, will amount at least to another £2 a week per man. This police force, therefore, will cost in pay and keep £3,000,000 per annum.

It will also be necessary to maintain a large military force in the conquered territories, and it is probable that this force will number for several years at least 40,000 men. Such a force will, making due allowance for the cost of living and for the general waste of a large body of men, cost £100,000 a week, or £5,000,000 a year. Thus the military occupation and the policing of the two territories will cost £8,000,000 a year, and the whole cost of the civil and military administration of the two territories cannot be less than £13,000,000 per annum.

A moment's consideration will prove to us that it will be impossible to raise from the Transvaal and the Free State more than a quarter of this amount. The taxable value of the Free State was always small, and after the war it will obviously be bankrupt. The agricultural resources of the Transvaal will be almost annihilated, and the English Ministry will find, as the Boer Government found, that their main source of revenue left is the mining industry, with the taxation drawn directly or indirectly from that industry.

The Government will be met at the outset by a difficulty of pressing urgency. For what reason did the Government embark in this war? Our Ministers have stated that the object of their policy was to redress the wrongs of British residents and to enforce British supremacy. If this is so, the war has obviously been under-

taken for Imperial interests, and the Ministers cannot consistently demand a contribution from the mine-owners, most of whom are non-British subjects. Nor shall we be able to demand an indemnity from the two Republics, for we have annexed them. They are our Colonies, and England cannot demand an indemnity from her own Provinces.

Mr. J. B. Robinson and other mine-owners have, during the last few months, vehemently protested against the placing of any heavier burdens on the mines, and the influence and the power of the mine-owners and the necessity of their co-operation with the English Government will force us to yield to their wishes and to spare the mines a burden much heavier than they bore under the Transvaal Government.

In 1898 the aggregate amount of dividends paid by the gold mines was under £5,000,000, and the taxes on profits paid by them to the Transvaal Government amounted to about £250,000. Making every allowance for an increased output of gold and lighter burdens, it will be impossible for the English Government to raise from the gold mines much more than £500,000 a year.

In addition to the sources of revenue which we have given above, there remain certain mining rights (*Bewaarplaatsen*) which, having been the property of the Transvaal Republic, will pass into the hands of its successors. The value of these rights has been exaggerated, and they probably will not realise more than £2,000,000, which, at 4 per cent., will yield an income of £80,000 a year.

We will now tabulate the various figures and form an estimate of the receipts and expenditure of the two States for the first few years of British administration. Such an estimate must, in the nature of things, be rough, but it will probably be found that the aggregate amounts are not far distant from the truth.

## RECEIPTS.

	£
Taxation of gold-mines ... ..	500,000
Imports ... ..	1,000,000
Netherlands Railway ... ..	750,000
Dues and licences ... ..	750,000
Income from sales of new concessions ...	80,000
Post Office ... ..	220,000
Other receipts ... ..	350,000
	<hr/>
	£3,650,000

## EXPENDITURE.

	£
Civil administration of the two provinces ...	5,000,000
Military occupation ... ..	5,000,000 <sup>*</sup>
Police force of 10,000 men ... ..	3,000,000
	<hr/>
	£13,000,000
	3,650,000
	<hr/>
Deficit ... ..	£9,350,000

It is possible and probable that this disastrous balance-sheet will be improved in the course of years, but no material improvement is possible while a military occupation of the two territories is necessary.

<sup>\*</sup> Whether this cost be undertaken by the two States or by the Imperial Government is of little importance. England must pay it.

The capital expense of the war must be met by some sort of loan, whether wholly by an addition to the national debt of England, or partly by a loan to the new Colonies under British guarantee. But the result will be the same. The interest on the money will and can only be paid by the English taxpayer. If the war is continued for a further considerable period, its capital expense will amount at least to £235,000,000, which will be increased to £250,000,000 if we assume that a special loan of £15,000,000 will be necessary for the restoration of agriculture, for the rebuilding of the burnt farms and for general development. The interest on this amount, allowing for a sinking fund, at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. will be £8,750,000, and if we add this amount to the deficit on the revenue accounts of the two States, *i.e.*, £9,350,000, we arrive at a total of over £18,000,000. Such is the annual burden which our new Colonies will lay upon us for some years if we determine to secure the submission of the inhabitants by military methods and to control their disaffection by the sword.

Of this huge annual expenditure no reduction can be made until the two provinces become settled and peaceful; and, looking at the future in the light of the past and the present, it would be imprudent to expect a partial withdrawal of our military forces and a reduction of our police force within four or five years from the end of the war.

## CHAPTER IX

### PEACE, OR GOVERNMENT WITH CONSENT

WHEN we turn from the lamentable prospects of continued warfare and military or Crown Colony rule to a reasonable and generous policy, we are met by the instant protests of pride. *But to propose terms again would be to confess an error, and to suffer a humiliation.* There, at last, we have touched the secret wound. It is our pride and not our wisdom which revolts. We fear to lose Prestige. Is not England growing weary of the sonorous phrases which have been fashionable of late? Education has brought with it a certain vulgarity not only of thought and temper but of expression. High and noble words and big sounding phrases are attractive. They serve to dignify a commonplace thought, and every third-rate writer or speaker must mouth of Patriotism and Imperialism and Prestige. They become stale by ignoble use, until sober men are sick of the sound of words which are as incongruous to their utterers as a Tudor palace to a *parvenu*.

The old cry is raised again that to oppose the Ministry is to encourage the enemy. Every argument of the opponents of this war has been met by the same protest: "The nation is at war ;

the Ministry therefore is sacrosanct ;” “ Every vote given to the Liberals is a vote given to the Boers ;” “ A whisper of criticism in England will encourage the Boer generals.”<sup>1</sup> The same poor and cowardly appeals were made by North and Wedderburn, and were met by Burke in language as apt to-day as it was a century and a quarter ago.

“ Sir, this vermin of court reporters, when they are forced into day upon one point, are sure to burrow in another ; but they shall have no refuge ; I will make them bolt out of all their holes . . . they take other ground, almost as absurd, but very common in modern practice and very wicked, which is to attribute the ill effect of ill-judged conduct to the arguments which had been used to dissuade us from it. They say that the opposition made in Parliament . . . encouraged the Americans to their resistance.”

“ If this unheard-of doctrine of the encouragement of rebellion were true, if it were true that an assurance of the friendship of numbers in this country towards the colonies could become an encouragement to them to break off all connection with it, what is the inference? Does anybody seriously maintain that, charged with my share of the public councils, I am not obliged to resist projects which I think

<sup>1</sup> It is now the proposal of the Ministry to withdraw 70,000 troops from South Africa in September, and to confine their energies to holding the lines. Could any step be taken more likely to encourage our—enemy?

[August 12, 1901.]

mischievous, lest men who suffer should be encouraged to resist? . . . Is it, then, a rule that no man in this nation shall open his mouth in favour of the colonies, shall defend their rights, or complain of their sufferings, or, when war breaks out, no man shall express his desires of peace? . . . By such acquiescence great kings and mighty nations have been undone; and if any are at this day in a perilous situation from rejecting truth and listening to flattery, it would rather become them to reform the errors under which they suffer than to reproach those who forewarned them of their danger."

We may, in the eyes of extreme and truculent partisans, suffer humiliation; but can we suffer greater humiliations than we have been enduring for eighteen months? The greatest Empire in the world has seen the greatest army it has ever sent from its shores held at bay by two little nations whose whole population is beneath that of a second-rate English town. We have a population of forty millions to draw upon, immense wealth and every resource of civilisation; the Boers have no reinforcements to look to, and they have no visible means of procuring supplies and ammunition. Their army is an army of farmers, and when they have been beaten they have been beaten by overwhelming numbers. If it is only a loss of prestige that we fear, let us be manly enough to recognise that we are likely to lose as much by a continuance as by a cessation of the war; and, at any rate, it is better to lose a little prestige than a sea of blood.



Again to open negotiations and to offer honourable terms may disclose weakness; but which is the greater weakness—to acknowledge our mistake, or in our foolish pride to blunder into the dark and difficult future, regardless of the cost, and ignorant of the goal? The strong man may confess his mistake and turn back, because he knows that he is strong, that he possesses the capacity of amendment, and that he can redeem his loss. The weak man, like the ill-bred among aristocrats, is conscious of his weakness, and fears detection. He hopes to cover his retreat by loud words, and, dreading the jeers of his friends, goes obstinately along to perdition.

If foreign nations look upon our change or purpose with scorn, let us take this comfort. In no way can we serve the interests of our rivals better than by continuing this war. Every pound we spend in South Africa, every man we lose, is their gain, and while we are bleeding they are watching and waiting. Every month of war weakens our strength, and sees us more impotent to defend the manifold interests of the Empire. Is this Prestige?

Statesmanship is common sense touched by imagination and informed by history; and the very essence of English political wisdom is compromise. It is common sense in action as opposed to the official mind in action. True statesmanship is the union of the ideal and the practical, and it recognises that what may be good for one people is unbearable by another; that human nature is largely composed of prejudices, and that to gain one advantage we often have to resign another; that a strict insistence on abstract rights not seldom results in the loss of rights more valuable. To carry

an argument to its logical conclusion may be in theory admirable; in ordinary life, and above all in political life, it is the extreme of folly. We must take other men and nations as we find them. God made them as he made us, and they are probably no worse and no better than we. If we wish to make men loyal subjects, we must offer them the motives of loyalty. To make a fetish of unconditional submission, to prolong a great and costly war because our enemy might make submission on certain terms and because he will not make submission on the terms which we, in a moment of rashness, have laid down, is obstinacy as criminal as was that of George III., and the result may be as fatal.

The problem of a practical settlement is obviously difficult from any point of view save that which recognises no difficulties that cannot be solved by sheer force. Indeed, it is not unlikely that the very difficulties of the case are among the main reasons why the British Government chose at first the course of demanding unconditional surrender from the Boers, instead of offering them reasonable terms. To admit this, of course, would be to confess that the war was forced on without foresight, and has been pursued for no good cause. The easiest course, at first sight, has seemed to be that of effecting a conquest, and leaving the settlement slowly to shape itself. Like haphazard methods in general, however, this course has merely increased the difficulty. The demand for mere surrender, and the means taken to enforce it, have made the burghers only more determined, more desperate, more irreconcilable. Without crying, then, over the spilt milk, let us consider

what plan of settlement may be suggested which has any chance of making peace and keeping it.

It is clear that Lord Kitchener, and in a lesser degree Lord Milner, is convinced that for our own sake and for the sake of South Africa this war should cease. Lord Kitchener himself was willing to make notable concessions. In February, 1901, he asked General Botha to meet him, and he there submitted to the Boer leader certain terms which in his opinion the English Government might be willing to accept. The most important of these were:

1. That military government should cease on the ceasing of hostilities, and that *an elected assembly* should advise the Crown Colony administration.

2. That the legal debts of the Republics incurred during the war should be taken over by the English Government.

3. That a gift of money should be made to repair burnt farms.

4. That the English Government should move the Governments of Cape Colony and Natal to grant an amnesty to all rebels.

Lord Kitchener's tentative proposals were laid before Mr. Chamberlain, and they were by him modified and made more stringent on these and other points. Whether these modifications were unacceptable to the Boer leaders, or whether Lord Kitchener's original proposals seemed to them impossible, we do not know. All we do know is that on March 16, 1901, General Botha, in a short letter, summarily declined to recommend the terms of the British Ministry to the earnest consideration of his Government. It is clear, therefore, that no terms at present are likely to be acceptable to the

Boers which do not give them a modified form of independence.

The simplest and, in the long run, the safest course would be a return to the *status quo ante* with such guarantees and modifications as would safeguard the interests of British subjects and our supremacy in South Africa. Any scheme which falls short of practical independence must ultimately bear within it the seeds of its own dissolution: the Boers will never rest until they have regained the right to manage their own affairs without vexatious interference. But in the present temper of the British public it is beyond the range of practical statesmanship to achieve such a result.

The ground of agreement, therefore, must be sought in the announcement by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons to the effect that in time the Boer provinces must have self-governing institutions. This, doubtless, clashes with language used about the same time by Lord Salisbury; but there are many reasons for holding that Mr. Chamberlain's view can carry the day, and it is not inconsistent with the terms which Lord Kitchener, obviously with Lord Milner's approval, proposed to Botha. In its way, however, stands the serious difficulty that the *time* of settlement must on his principles be determined by military considerations. Not till the commander in the field reports tranquillity and security is the British Government likely to withdraw its forces and to consent to a period of Crown Colony government, which in its turn is to be followed by such colonial self-government as prevails in Canada and Australia. And this, as already suggested, is probably a main reason

why, up to last February, Lord Kitchener had not been authorised to *offer* terms to the enemy. Such an offer would have to specify dates; and to do this, from Mr. Chamberlain's point of view, would involve stipulations for a somewhat prolonged military occupation and autocratic government before the advent of representative institutions. That the Boers would willingly accept such terms is somewhat unlikely. Their acceptance would mean their submission to a martial law administered by the very men whom lately they had been fighting; and no one who has studied the operation of martial law can well believe that under these of all circumstances it would be administered in an endurable fashion.

Here emerges the fatality of the resort to arms, with its normal sequel of angry persistence up to the point of partial exhaustion. Terms which *might* be offered and accepted at an early stage are at that stage refused: when they *are* offered, the stage of willing acceptance is passed. In the American War of Independence, the Ministry of Lord North sent commissioners in 1777 with powers to make a settlement. Had this been done in 1775 there might have been no Declaration of Independence; but in 1777 the concessions offered came too late, and the war went on. The simple fact is that the temper which makes war blinds men to the means which can either avert or stop it.

If, then, there is to be any diplomatic arrest of the war in South Africa, it must be by way of a plan which transcends the difficulties that now hem in Mr. Chamberlain, yet stands a fair chance of being accepted by the Ministerial party. We must seek a solution which can be accepted by the Boers

as being not worse for them than a continuance of the war, while at the same time it does not restore the conditions of unstable equilibrium that led to the war. There are evidently three conditions which are indispensable to a *peaceful* settlement. There must be (1) a general amnesty; (2) the gift of a sum to rebuild the property which we have destroyed contrary to the laws of nations and of war; (3) a grant of representative institutions within a reasonable period—which period must be defined in any agreement made. It is foolish to expect the Boers to throw themselves on our mercy, and to trust to our generosity without a covenant. If we were in like circumstances, if we had seen our land devastated and our independence taken from us, if moreover we knew that the ambition of our political foes was to keep us in political subjection for the longest possible time—should we be so vacant of common sense as to make a vague agreement without definite mention of periods and dates? There must, of course, be an armistice and a short interregnum. It would be impossible at once to recommence the working of representative government amid the chaos of war, and a period of at least six months would be necessary to clear away the *débris* of conflict, and to rebuild for the Boers their ruined habitations. But a date should be given, and to it we should adhere. What form of self-government we shall grant the Boers, what guarantees we shall exact, what safeguards we shall impose—these are points on which divergent views may reasonably be held. The main thing is peace with the consent of both nations, and as a contribution to this peace the following sug-

gestions are offered with due diffidence, though they are made after a careful and anxious calculation of all the ostensible possibilities. They are doubtless open to many objections, but they will serve as a basis of discussion, and they would probably be acceptable both to the Boers and to the Dutch in Cape Colony.

*Let the Boers be required to disband on the conditions that—*

(1) A general amnesty shall be proclaimed both for the inhabitants of the two provinces and for the Cape rebels.

(2) The former Republics shall be made constituent provinces in a South African Federation under the British flag on the lines of that of Australia ; each of the Boer States retaining its local legislature, subject, on equal terms with the other States, to the common control of the Federation.

(3) Neither State shall be at liberty to enter into foreign diplomatic relations of any kind, or to set up any military organisation save such as may be authorised by the common Parliament of the Federation, with a view to possible danger from native races.

(4) Further, not only shall the franchise conditions in the Boer provinces be pre-determined (either in the common Parliament, under the usual supervision by the Crown, or by separate agreement), but the fiscal control of the Johannesburg mines<sup>1</sup> shall be similarly determined, to the end that—

(5) The taxation to be drawn from the mines

<sup>1</sup> The government of the Rand district must always be a difficult problem, whether under Boer or British rule. If in the forthcoming settlement some special arrangement were possible for the separate administration of this part of the Transvaal, many dangers of the future would be avoided.

shall be directed (a) primarily to the repair of all the destruction and impoverishment wrought by the war, without distinction of race; and (b) secondarily, after such restoration, to the general development and administration of the federated provinces of South Africa.

(6) These conditions being agreed to, the Boer provinces shall not be administered by martial law in the interval between the surrender and the constitution of the Federation; but the British Government shall be entitled to maintain at specified places forces sufficient to preserve order, while the former Parliaments of the two Boer States shall as soon as possible recommence the normal administration of the country, save and except as regards the former military organisation.

(7) In order to hasten and guarantee the repair of the destruction and impoverishment wrought by the war on both sides, the British Government shall raise on loan and guarantee a fund (to be specified) at a date not later than six months after the cessation of hostilities, such fund to be disbursed and administered by three or four Chief Justices (of South Africa), one British Financial Expert, two Boers of high station, and two high British officials, one High Commissioner (= four Boers and five or six British), as they shall see fit.

(8) On the constitution of the South African Federation, the fund so disbursed shall be recognised as part of the common debt of such Federation, and the interest upon it shall be met out of the common revenue. The existing debts of the other provinces shall be treated in the same fashion.



(9) Such constitution of the South African Federation shall take place as soon as is compatible with proper arrangements, and shall on no account be delayed more than three years from the date of cessation of hostilities.

(10) The seat of the common Parliament of the Federation shall be in a central place, to be agreed upon by the Parliaments of the four provinces.

(11) The system of education, the treatment of natives, and the use of the English and the Dutch language shall be, as far as possible, uniform in all the constituent States.

To this line of settlement the most obvious objection is that it commits Cape Colony and Natal to a Federation on which they have not been asked to pronounce. This, however, may be met by an offer of an immediate armistice, to last for a given period, during which the Parliaments of the two Colonies, and those of the two Boer States, may vote on the general question of a Federation, leaving open only such details as cannot be readily settled. As the refusal to accept Federation all round would mean the indefinite prolongation of a war which in different degrees is disastrous to all the provinces concerned, as well as to the British Empire, there is fair reason to trust that all would acquiesce. If not, everything would be recommitted to the fortune of war.

I do not put forward a scheme of Federation as the only means of ending a situation which is becoming as intolerable for us as for our enemy. There are other schemes and other methods which British statesmanship is surely competent to evolve and to apply. But I believe that every man who

approaches this problem with a mind free from party rancour or racial hate will agree that the highest aim of practical statesmen should be to make our new subjects willing subjects, and that the only way to make them such is to remove the chief causes of unrest, to give them an immediate interest in peace and a direct motive for loyalty.

The chief objection which the advocates of continued warfare bring against a policy of conciliation is that to make peace is to betray the Loyalists. The electorate in Cape Colony is, as we have seen, divided for political purposes into two parties, the Loyalists or Progressives and the Dutch. Each party has its own political organisation, the Loyalists being served by the South African League and the Dutch by the Afrikaner Bond. Before the unhappy event of 1895 the rivalry between the two parties was not greatly intensified by the rivalry of race ; but after that fatal episode the cleavage between the two parties became deep and wide and the division became a racial one. It is necessary to warn the reader that "Loyalist" is a party name, and did not in happier years imply a corresponding disloyalty in the opposing party. Both parties were up to 1898 perfectly loyal to the English Throne, though there was a natural temptation on the side of the Loyalists to impute disloyalty to the Dutch—a temptation strengthened and encouraged by the capitalists of the Rand and by Lord Milner's indiscreet utterances. The Loyalists have gradually passed under the power and influence of the financial and mining leaders of Capetown and Johannesburg, while the Dutch have been forced by the violence of their opponents and the partisanship of

the English officials into an attitude of passive or active disloyalty. The social and political situation in Cape Colony is thus one of acute danger, and unless a strong and wise effort is quickly made, the Dutch will drift into permanent disaffection.

The statement that to make peace is to betray the Loyalists has little meaning and less justice. The Loyalists in the two States will be, under the terms of any arrangement we may make with the Boers, perfectly safe from Boer persecution, while the Loyalists in Cape Colony can suffer from peace nothing worse than disappointment. The Loyalists, both in the two Republics and in the Colony, are in no danger, and the outcry which they raise now against peace, as the outcry they raised two years ago for war, springs from a bitter partisanship which desires to crush the Dutch under an iron rule. Their obvious and declared ambition is to make the Dutch a subject race. Nor must it be forgotten that some of the Loyalists of Cape Colony and Natal have no urgent motive for peace. Many of them are making enormous sums of money from Government contracts, and the chief ports which are the bases of supply are being enriched at the loss of the British taxpayer. Most Loyalists are doubtless uninfluenced by financial motives, but many of the leaders are so moved, and all are moved by political bitterness. It is not an ungenerous but a reasonable and prudent thing to examine possible motives, and to accept with caution the arguments of men whose direct interests are concerned in the continuance of a given policy. The capitalists own and inspire the chief South African newspapers, who in their turn influence the Loyalist

Ministry of Cape Colony and the English Press. The respect which the English Ministry and the English journals pay to the ferocious<sup>1</sup> demands of the Loyalists is both grotesque and tragical, while the patience of the British public is sublime and foolish. When shall we begin to consider our own interests?

The dangers of a liberal policy are, in the opinion of its opponents, the continued existence of two hostile States which might become a nucleus of intrigue against British supremacy and might favour foreign intervention, while we should again be exposed in the course of a few years to an increase of the armaments of the Boers. That these dangers do to a certain degree exist, and that they are likely to exist for some time is true, but the policy of annexation will rather increase than diminish them.

It will be impossible to prevent the Boers in the two Republics from arming themselves with rifles; and in fact no sane Ministry would, in

<sup>1</sup> The following telegram will give the British public an idea of the chivalry of those Loyalists for whom we are pouring out our blood and treasure like water. Mr. Logan is a prominent Loyalist, and a Member of the Legislative Council of Cape Colony. His last words are of course a direct incentive to murder :—

"Matjesfontein, May 23rd, 1900.—Before the Dukes left here for the front Mr. Logan armed them with a Maxim, with the following result : 'From Colonel Spence Douglas to Hon. Logan, Matjesfontein. May 22nd. Your Maxim was in action yesterday, and did excellent work. Much obliged to you for all your kindness to me and the regiment. Hope all well with you.' This brought the following reply from Mr. Logan : 'Exceedingly glad that gun has been of use. Will pay men using it one pound for every rebel they shoot, but will deduct twenty-five per cent. for all prisoners taken.'"

view of the dangers which white men must face daily in South Africa, attempt to prohibit the use of small arms. The larger armaments we could forbid, and we could probably make our prohibition effective. But if we govern the two Republics either by military rule or as a Crown Colony, we shall in time unite the whole population against ourselves, whereas if we allow them to retain a modified independence we shall escape an enormous annual outlay, many dangers, and countless perplexities. The Boers will be the most difficult subjects that the Empire has ever governed. A continuance of their independence, limited by guarantees and safeguards, will convert them from rebels into neighbours, sullen perhaps, but unlikely to inflict practical injuries upon us. Annexed and held down by force, the Boers will be ever scheming for foreign assistance. Independent, they will be as hostile to foreign interference as they have been to British interference.

It is clear that one of the chief difficulties which have faced the Government and which will face it in the future is the question of amnesty for the Cape rebels. In theory and in logic their offence has undoubtedly merited the severest punishment. They have been guilty of high treason, and they are therefore liable to the severest penalty which can be enforced under ordinary law or special law or martial law. But in matters of practical wisdom there is not so much room for legal theory and logic as the unobservant may suppose. History teaches us that the theorist and the logician are commonly the worst statesmen, and that common sense is the basis of wise policy. If it is true that the Dutch and the English have

to live permanently side by side not only in the two Republics but in Cape Colony and Natal, it should obviously be the aim of the wise statesman to remove all possible causes of friction and discontent. If the Government are weak, they will yield again to the fierce outcry of those Loyalists in South Africa whose violence has led our Ministry into its present deplorable position, and will refuse an amnesty to the Dutch in Cape Colony who have taken up arms on behalf of their kinsmen. If the Government are wise they will remember that these rebels are men of the same blood as the citizens of the two Republics, that they have been induced to support their kinsmen by a sympathy which, however wrong-headed, was at least the result of generous motives. There can be no peace in South Africa until the two races are brought to live side by side in moderate friendship. If we keep the wound open by insisting on disfranchisement or imprisonment, we are deliberately placing obstacles in the path of a peaceful future. We can govern only by consent of the governed; and every citizen whom we do not pardon, whom we leave embittered by the loss of his own political privileges or of the rights of those who are near and dear to him, is a definite and irremovable obstacle to a peaceful settlement in South Africa. The policy of revenge has been tried, and it has always failed: the policy of amnesty has been tried, and it has nearly always succeeded.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER

WE have now reached the close of our consideration of this great problem. We have seen that as the war of 1775 arose through the assertion of the right of sovereignty over the American Colonies, so the war with the South African Republics in 1899 arose from the assertion of the right of England as suzerain power to interfere in the internal concerns of the Transvaal. We have seen how this cruel and deplorable war was the outcome of grievous mistakes on both sides of incapacity and perverse distrust on the part of the Boers, of gross ignorance and of an insincere and awkward diplomacy on the part of our advisers and officials.

We have reviewed the melancholy catalogue of absurdities of statement and prediction which have marked the history of the last two years. We have heard the public told that the Boers were a semi-barbaric, unwashed, wholly dishonest and corrupt race of men who had taken advantage of our ill-timed generosity to build up on our frontiers a powerful military system and to threaten our empire with a malignant conspiracy. We have seen the public believing that the Out-

landers were outraged by these men, that English settlers were humiliated, persecuted, robbed and murdered, that they were "helots" in a land which they had enriched by their exertions, that they were wandering through the streets of Johannesburg with downcast eyes and speaking with bated breath in the presence of the tyrant Boers. We were told that at last two great Englishmen had arisen to say that no longer should such disgrace rest on the name of the great Empire.

It is a humiliating task to review the stages of our pathetic optimism. We were told that Mr. Chamberlain's strong words and Lord Milner's firm attitude would bring the Boers to reason; that the despatch of a few thousand troops would prevent a war; that 30,000 men would crush the enemy in three months; that £9,000,000 would more than cover our expenses, and that the two Republics would repay us that sum; that 500 killed and wounded would be more than the total of our losses; that after the first defeat the Dutch would accept the inevitable and look to us with love and admiration; that the capture of Bloemfontein was the conquest of the Free State; that the occupation of Pretoria was the end of the war; that British troops were securely occupying our new possessions, that severity would teach the new Boers a lesson, and that the devastation of their farms would quickly tame their stubborn spirit. Finally, in September, 1900, we were told by the Government that the campaign was practically finished, and in November, 1900, we were told by Lord Roberts that the war was over.

Is it necessary to demonstrate the absurdity of these predictions? We have sent 300,000 troops



to South Africa ; we have spent nearly £150,000,000, and we know that no contribution can come from the ruined provinces ; we have lost 16,000 men by death, and 53,000 have left South Africa as invalids. Are we nearer the end, or are we not losing more men every month than we lost in the period of our early disasters ?<sup>1</sup> Have we not evacuated half the towns we once occupied, and do not Boer commandoes roam at will over Cape Colony ?

The ironies of the war are no less ludicrous. We went to war to extend the franchise to the whole body of citizens in the Transvaal ; we are now told not only that the first outcome of the war will be a military government of the two provinces, and that representative institutions may be postponed for generations, but also that our fellow subjects in Cape Colony are to be deprived of their constitutional rights. Lord Salisbury solemnly asserted that we sought no territory and no goldfields ; the result of our first victory was an equally definite statement that we intended to annex the two Republics. We reproached the Boers with the heavy burden on the mines : we are going to double the taxation. The declared ambition of our Ministers was to bring peace and reconciliation to the two races ; the result of the war has been to generate a most ferocious hatred between the English and the Dutch, and to deprive our fellow-subjects in Cape Colony of their civil liberties. We were told that in the Transvaal not the least outrage on justice was the control of the judges by the executive ; we

<sup>1</sup> The monthly average of our casualties during the first five months of the war was 1,647 ; the casualty list for June, 1901, contained 3,919 cases.

now hear that under the new rule the judges will be directly under the control of Lord Milner. It was imputed as a fault to the Transvaal Government that Dutch was the only language permissible in the law courts ; we are now informed that in a Dutch country the English language only is to be used. We were told that the elevation of the native was an object of our ambition : we now hear that Lord Milner will forward that elevation by a system of lashes.

We have followed the course of the war from the disasters of its first months to the early and brilliant successes of Lord Roberts. We have seen how, after the fall of Bloemfontein, the golden opportunity of peace was lost ; how, during the last twelve tedious months, the unwearying labours of our brave army have borne little fruit. We have seen that a policy of devastation has resulted in a more embittered hostility and a more tenacious determination on the part of our enemy. We have seen the area of the war, enormous at first, increased by the invasion of Cape Colony. We have seen that Colony held down by martial law, distracted by racial hate, and torn by civil war. We have seen our troops struck down by fever, stale and weary ; we have seen the whole of South Africa divided into two hostile camps, traversed by hurrying columns, carrying ruin and desolation to a country which is to add to our prosperity. We have examined the alternatives that lie before us, how the unconditional submission<sup>1</sup> which our Ministers still

<sup>1</sup> The solemn appeal which Burke made in 1777 in his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol might be made almost literally to-day : " I think I know America. If I do not

demand will result in permanent disaffection and danger and in a grievous strain of our military and financial resources. We have searched for a way of escape from a melancholy future. We have examined the other alternative which promises reconciliation and peace and freedom from the dangers which, if we are unwise, we shall lay upon ourselves and our heirs.

We have seen the touching confidence of the English people rudely shaken; we have seen every estimate of our Ministers falsified, every statement disproved, every calculation refuted, every hope shattered, every prophecy unfulfilled. Is not the cup of error full to the brim?

The public has suffered and has learnt much since October, 1899. It is slowly recovering from the heady fumes of Ministerial wine, and it is now better able to distinguish between the voice of error and the voice of truth. The English people, bewildered, alarmed, angered, and agonised, is groping towards the truth. It can no longer trust its prophets. For not the least danger of prophecy is its nonfulfilment. A falsified forecast demoralises its utterer, and leads him to seek from every quarter save the right one the explanation of his error. As

my ignorance is incurable, for I have spared no pains to understand it; and I do most solemnly assure those of my constituents who put any sort of confidence in my industry and integrity that everything that has been done there has arisen from a total misconception of the object; that our means of originally holding America, that our means of reconciling with it after a quarrel, of recovering it after separation, of keeping it after victory, did depend, and must depend, in their several stages and periods, upon a total renunciation of that unconditional submission which has taken such possession of the minds of violent men."

one false statement leads to the manufacture of a second to shield the first, so the error of the bold and unsuccessful prophet leads him into a wilder prophecy and a more dangerous path. The public sees that it has been deceived by its Ministers, deceived by its officials, deceived by its newspapers, and it asks itself whether the gigantic errors of the past may not be ominous of future mistakes as great and possibly more dangerous.

The failure of our Ministers throughout the negotiations of 1899, and the long war which has ensued, is due to their lack of imagination and to their ignorance of human nature. They held that the Boers would yield to diplomatic pressure, firmly and consistently applied. They believed that the despatch of troops and the embodying of an army corps would complete the surrender which diplomacy had not been able to effect. They believed that the men whom defeat in the field had not terrified would weaken at the sight of their burning farms and their imprisoned wives. They did not know that a stubborn race could face all dangers and every form of death for their freedom.

From this lamentable error have flowed all those subsequent troubles and disasters which have plunged South Africa into desolation and England into grief: in its train have followed the cruel and odious necessity of making war on women and children, the bitter griefs of thousands of English homes. The denial to the Boer Government of the ordinary rights of nations, the insistence upon unconditional submission and the threat of the total loss of their independence, were certain to engender in the hearts of the Boer nation a deter-

mination to struggle for their independence until the death. Our Ministers have given us many examples of their ignorance of the most elementary facts of history and experience. If there is one thing that brave men will fight for it is for the independence of their country. For this they will struggle, and rightly struggle, against overwhelming odds. If Lord Salisbury and Mr. Chamberlain had been wise in the spring of 1900, we should now have been enjoying peace for more than a year, and it would have been an honourable peace, which brought us all we ever asked or claimed of the two Republics, which would have placed the States under the British flag, and which might have brought about the federation of South Africa.

From that fair picture turn to this. From end to end South Africa is in the grip of war. Throughout the two annexed Republics many of the richest of the farms and villages are charred and blackened ruins. Cape Colony itself is the scene of civil war, the women and children of our foes are gathered into prison camps, and there are learning nothing but bitter hatred of our rule. Our army, long since weary of a tedious campaign, sick with disappointment, and decimated by fever, is still pursuing a phantom foe. Meantime, the war, which at the end of March, 1900, had probably cost under £30,000,000, has cost us since that date at least £120,000,000 more, and is costing us over a million and a half a week. The drain of brave lives is more terrible. On March 17, 1900, the total number of men taken prisoners, killed in action or by disease, and sent home as invalids was 13,974. On June 30, 1901, the total list of casualties

was 71,383. Therefore the refusal of our Government to grant the Boers reasonable terms of peace has cost us the lives, or health, or services of over 57,000 men. Each week as it passes now sees the death from wounds or disease of one hundred and fifty men and the disablement through the same causes of perhaps eight hundred more, while the number of those whose hearts and strength are failing them of sheer exhaustion and weariness our generals in South Africa alone can tell. What a commentary on the optimism of our rulers, on the fiction of a finished war! The tragedy of it, the despair and the folly, are solely due to the inability of our Government to grasp the truth that a brave people will fight for its independence to the last cartridge.

Providence has indeed decreed that because man's happiness depends greatly on his illusions he shall not escape the dangers which are incident to them. We are facing those dangers now. The policy of our Government is a failure, self-evident and self-confessed. Is it wise to delude ourselves any longer with comfortable words from a Fool's Paradise? One by one our illusions are falling from us, one by one our fond and foolish hopes are melting into grim realities. We are now, at all events, face to face with facts. The gloomy review of the situation which Lord Milner, on February 6, 1901, despatched to Mr. Chamberlain makes it clear that not only are we making no progress in the two States, but that since August, 1900 there has been a steady and ominous retrogression. The situation, in Lord Milner's words, is "puzzling."

Nor is our own financial danger less ominous.

The purely military expenses of the war must amount at the present time to £1,750,000 a week, and to this we must add the enormous cost of maintaining the 19,000 prisoners of war, the 50,000 Boer women and children and non-combatants who are gathered into refugee camps, the large number of refugees at Capetown and Durban, and possibly a considerable number of the native population of South Africa. What the weekly expenditure on such maintenance may be we can only dimly guess, but we shall certainly not pass the truth if we put it from £150,000 to £200,000 a week. The expenses of the war, therefore, are now nearly £2,000,000 a week, and such expenses tend to increase rather than to diminish.<sup>1</sup>

The most disastrous feature of the whole outlook is that our loss in money and lives will not cease with the ceasing of the war. If we were engaged in hostilities with a European nation, from whose country we should retire on the con-

<sup>1</sup> The following table will convey a rough idea of the loss in money which a prolongation of the war will entail upon the British people, assuming that the total expenditure up to April 1st has been £130,000,000, and also assuming that the cost will increase rather than decrease.

The reader must remember that official estimates are seldom correct, and should be enlarged by at least 15 per cent. Moreover to these estimates must be added the enormous sums which must be paid as compensation to British subjects at the close of the war. See also note p. 199.

Cost to April 1, 1901	...	...	£130,000,000
" July 1, 1901	...	...	£154,000,000
" October 1, 1901	...	...	£179,000,000
" January 1, 1902	...	...	£205,000,000
" April 1, 1902	...	...	£232,000,000
" July 1, 1902	...	...	£268,000,000
" October 1, 1902	...	...	£289,000,000

clusion of peace, we should at all events be able to calculate our expenses and to feel that our future was to that extent secure and definite. But we are about to add to the Empire two unwilling colonies; and the maintenance there of a large military force, combined with the costly re-settlement of a devastated land, will involve us in an indefinite cost for an indefinite number of years. It is now acknowledged that the Free State will furnish us with nothing, and that for several years the Transvaal will be practically insolvent. The peace, when it comes, will cost us over £18,000,000 a year. Was ever victory so disastrous or peace so costly?

The financial future is indeed disquieting. The war has brought with it a serious and apparently permanent increase in our ordinary naval and military estimates. It is clear, as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach pointed out on the introduction of the Budget of 1901, that the extra taxation which we have been bearing during the last year, and which is now about to be enlarged, is only sufficient to meet our increased expenditure. If the war were over to-morrow, we could not remit these heavy burdens. We are paying war taxes, but we are not paying for the war with them. On the contrary, if trade declines to any considerable extent during the next two

The loss of life, by battle and disease, is at least 150 a week, *i.e.*, 7,800 a year.

The cost of the Crimean war, which we have always regarded as a great and costly struggle, was only £70,000,000; while the loss of life was about 20,500, of whom only about 3,000 died from violence, and the rest of disease or exhaustion. The twenty years' war against Napoleon added £600,000,000 to the National Debt, and the war of 1775-83 added £70,000,000.



years we shall have, unless we reduce our ordinary expenditure, to increase the burden of taxation. We have enlarged in two years our National Debt by £120,000,000, *i.e.*, by one-fifth of its former bulk. It is foolish to ignore the danger that a continuance of hostilities on the present scale will produce a financial crisis at home. Wealthy as England is, she cannot bear for long a strain so grievous. Our national solvency and credit<sup>1</sup> depends on a decreasing National Debt, and if the war continues we must increase that debt at the rate of £100,000,000 per annum. All we can do, if the present policy is to hold the field, is to pay on, knowing not only that nothing will come back to us from these provinces which we have annexed, but that they will add an annual sum of not less than £18,000,000 to the burdens under which we are already labouring. And this is the financial result of a war which was one of "practical business."<sup>2</sup>

When we shrink from a future so melancholy,

<sup>1</sup> One result of this war has been to lower the price of Consols from 112 to 94, and to depreciate high-class securities by £220,000,000 (see *Banker's Magazine*, July, 1901). In his last Loan the Chancellor of the Exchequer was only able to obtain £93·15 for each £100. If the Loan had been made in 1899, he would have obtained £112. A loss of £18·5 per £100 has thus been made, or on the whole amount of £60,000,000 a loss of £10,950,000. The average man can easily test his losses through this war. If in 1899 he had £10,000 in Consols, he has now only £8,000 in value. If he had in 1899 £10,000 in ordinary railway stock, he is now worth not more than £7,000. His income tax is nearly doubled, many of his dividends are being seriously reduced, and nearly every requisite of life has increased in price.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cecil Rhodes's words.

when we seek for light on our path, we are met by the cry that to be prudent is to be weak, that to use our common sense is to surrender our rights, that we must still continue to shear the wolf we have by the ears.<sup>1</sup> Our Ministers

<sup>1</sup> Again let Burke speak to us: "But I must say a few words on the subject of these *rights*, which have cost us so much, and which are likely to cost us our all. Good God! Mr. Speaker, are we yet to be told of the rights for which we went to war? Oh, excellent rights! Oh, valuable rights! Valuable you should be, for we have paid at parting with you. Oh, valuable rights! that have cost Britain thirteen provinces, four islands, a hundred thousand men, and more than seventy millions of money! Oh, wonderful rights! that have lost to Great Britain her boasted, grand, and substantial superiority which made the world bend before her! . . . What were these rights? Can any man describe them? Can any man give them a body and a soul, a tangible substance, answerable to all these mighty costs? We did all this because we had a right to do it; that was exactly the fact, 'And all this we dared to do because we dared.' We had a right to tax America, says the noble lord, and as we had a right we must do it. We must risk everything, forfeit everything, think of no consequences, take no consideration into view but our right; consult no ability, nor measure our right with our power, but must have our right. Oh, miserable and infatuated Ministers! miserable and undone country! not to show that right signifies nothing without might; that the claim without the power of enforcing it was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival States or of immense bodies of people. Oh, says a silly man full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field, *there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf, and therefore he must be sheared*. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? Have you considered the trouble? How will you get the wool? Oh, *I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing but my right; a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn, and therefore I will shear the wolf*. This was just the kind of reasoning urged by the Minister, and this the counsel he has given."

still urge us to yield our scruples to their foresight. The road is dark and difficult, and we ask ourselves what manner of men are our guides. It is too late for them to appeal for our silence. There are times when silence is patriotic; but there is a limit to all things, and there are times when silence is an abnegation of intelligence. The time has come when the public must take its fate into its own hands. Our Governors have been tried and have been found wanting.

Nor do they see the end. We are drifting now in the blind hope of some happy chance. Our Ministers seem to know neither how to make war nor how to make peace. You cannot conquer a brave enemy by a proclamation, or end a great war by the mouth of the town-crier. An army slowly weakening with the ravages of disease and the sickness of deferred hope must be fed by new and vigorous blood; and to ignore the danger of collapse or to take refuge in hopeful platitudes is to act the part of a nerveless imbecile, not the part of a strong statesman. If we are to make war, let us at all events make it like men; if we are to sin, let us at all events sin like heroes. Strength we can all respect, even though it be unscrupulous; but to be unscrupulous and to be weak—surely this is to be ridiculous in the eyes of gods and men. Let us at last face facts, and frame a policy which shall meet those facts. Let us cast off and abjure that foolish optimism, that incurable levity, that weak fatalism which blind men to their own incapacity and to approaching disaster. There is only one thing inevitable in life: sin and its wage. All else is within the range of human

wisdom. The plea of the "inevitable" is the last refuge of the incompetent.

The contest has been raging too long round names rather than essential principles or the demands of prudence. The good name of a Minister or a Viceroy is of no account in comparison with the lasting welfare of our country. These men pass, they become as the shadows of nothing, but England endures. We must act with a single eye to her interests, knowing that mercy and judgment and honour are in the end wise policy. We have made a gigantic mistake; let us confess our error like giants, and not, like pigmies, seek to hide it. To return to reason and common sense is no weakness; rather is it a counsel of black despair which bids us continue to tread the same weary and costly path which we are treading now.

A great nation has, like a healthy man, a natural power of recovery. To foresee the disruption of the Empire because we have not been able to complete a task of immense difficulty is to argue that our greatness has feet of clay, and that our prestige is a misty phantom to be dissolved by the test of fact. England has suffered in past years by the folly and violence of her rulers; she has before this undertaken a work beyond her reasonable strength. But her failure, tragical as it was, was no forerunner of her doom.

To make an honourable peace with the Boers will indeed disclose a failure; for the peace we shall be forced to make with the Boers may be the peace we might have made many months ago, and the sacrifices of those months will have been of no avail. But it is useless to disguise from ourselves

or the world that we have failed. It is not given to the wisest man or the greatest State always to be wise, always to succeed. Men and nations often utter rash and proud words of which later they repent. Are they to be held for ever bound to the performance of a promise made in ignorance and haste? Let us be manly enough to confess our mistake and we may be assured that if we are wise in time, it will not count against us for long in the assize of the nations.

In such a controversy as we have recently passed through the majority is seldom in the right. The nature of man is prone to violent courses, to selfishness of aim and to haughtiness of temper. It was a minority which opposed the policy of North in 1775 : it was a minority which attacked the insane adventure of the Crimea : it was a minority which in 1863 supported the cause of the North against the South. In each case, the few and faithful men, voices crying in the wilderness, were assailed by every form of virulent abuse ; but who will now say that they were in error ?

Let us cultivate a historic detachment, and endeavour to review this war with something of the cool reasonableness with which our sons and grandsons will regard it, with which we can now criticise the folly of the Crimea and the blindness of 1775. The tale of folly is ancient as the hills, recurrent as the seasons. That which the apostles of unconditional submission preach to us now, the apostles of the same policy preached to our forefathers a hundred and twenty-five years ago. From mercy and reason and good sense they declared would flow the loss of our Colonies, of our self-

respect, of our prestige, of our place among the nations. The same voice is speaking now from different lips, and if we follow its counsel we shall suffer as our fathers suffered ; and even as they lost America, so, though we may win the immediate prize on which our hearts are set, will the future bring its retribution and the loss of the land we are striving to conquer.

There are dangers and difficulties in a policy of conciliation, but they are less numerous and less menacing than the dangers of continued violence. If the Imperial Government and the two races are earnest in their desire for peace a way will be found out of the difficulties, and safeguards will be devised against the dangers. To close a terrible and devastating war with a peace which gives us more than all we required from our enemy, which places the two States under the British flag, and which may bring about a union of South Africa, is surely no weak or dishonouring surrender.

We must attempt to realise the scenes of horror and desolation and hatred with which South Africa is now accursed. The two Dutch Republics are blackened deserts, Natal and Cape Colony are divided into hostile camps. A state of civil discord, even of civil war, exists. Sons of the same father are fighting on opposite sides ; the mother sympathises with the Dutch, the daughter with the English ; the springs of social intercourse are poisoned. For the Dutch South Africa is almost a hell. And yet the Dutch in Cape Colony are our fellow-subjects. They have the same rights and privileges as an English citizen at home, and they have been up to the present moment as loyal to the Sovereign of England as his most

loyal subject in Great Britain. If their loyalty has been undermined is it matter for surprise? The Dutch in Cape Colony are, with the exception of the inhabitants of Capetown, under martial law, which is in fact the negation of all law. They are liable to punishment if they stir out of their houses after the time of curfew, if they make a jesting remark to an English soldier. Their horses are taken from them, their cattle, their forage, and even their boots. Their papers are suppressed, their editors are imprisoned, their Parliament is indefinitely prorogued, and all their representative rights are in abeyance. Can we wonder if their loyalty to the English throne has in this chilling atmosphere grown cold?

That the situation in Cape Colony is growing more serious is proved by the desperate methods of our authorities. They have flown to a policy of the gallows—a policy dangerous to future peace and probably as dangerous to present safety. The risks of such a policy are increased ten-fold by the barbarous method of forcing the Dutch residents to attend the execution of their fellow Dutch—a brutality which no Englishman could have initiated, and which is without doubt the inspiration of a Loyalist or a financier. Such a scene as that described below will burn itself into the imagination and memory of the Dutch, and is one more proof of the folly of our rulers.<sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup> Several Dutch who had joined the Boer invaders have recently been executed at Dordrecht, Middleburg, and Cradock. The chief Dutch residents have been compelled not only to listen to the public promulgation of the death sentences, but also to attend the execution. "The execution of Marais at Middleburg took place on July 10, 1901, and for the first time in the history of Middleburg the black

The Loyalists of Cape Colony are the greatest obstacle to peace. The rivalry between the Loyalists and the Dutch has been both political and racial; but it has been chiefly political, and a political party ever resents the domination of its rival. But such domination implies no political or physical slavery, and to summon the aid of war to adjust the balance of politics is surely a

flag was hoisted this morning at nine o'clock, when the prisoner Marais was executed. Many of the leading residents were ordered to attend, and were present. The medical examination showed that death was painless and instantaneous. The prisoner was much calmer than yesterday." (Reuter.)

The following paragraph is taken from a Cape paper :

"Amongst these was Mr. De Waal, M.L.A., who entered the precincts of the gaol attired in deep mourning, with streamers of crape hanging from his hat. He broke down completely before the executioner, Blake, had drawn the bolt, and from all that could be gathered from other prisoners there is no doubt that the execution impressed them to an extent which will never be forgotten."

Similar scenes took place at Drodrecht and Cradock.

The probable effect of this policy may be estimated by the power which even after eighty-five years the memory of Slachter's Nek has over the imagination of the Dutch.

"No wonder that in 1815 a number of the Boers were driven into rebellion, a rebellion which found an awful ending in the horrible occurrence of the 9th of March, 1816, when six of the Boers were half hung up in the most inhuman way in the compulsory presence of their wives and children. Their death was truly horrible, for the gallows broke down before the end came; but they were again hoisted up in the agony of dying, and strangled to death in the murderous tragedy of Slachter's Nek. Whatever opinions have been formed of this occurrence in other respects, it was at Slachter's Nek that the first blood-stained beacon was erected, which marks the boundary between Boer and Briton in South Africa." (Reitz, "A Century of Wrong," p. 6. 1900.)



monstrous demand. We are told that to concede terms of peace to the Boers is to sacrifice the Loyalists in Cape Colony and to sap the foundations of their attachment to the mother country. But is not this a shameful plea ; for what does it mean but that their loyalty is a plant of such tender and fickle growth that it must be watered with the blood and strengthened by the removal of every rival ? In what way will the grant of honourable terms to the Boers of the Transvaal and the Free State imperil the safety of the Loyalists of Cape Colony ? That safety will not be imperilled. It is then clear that political hatred of the Dutch in the Colony and in the two States drives these bitter partisans to demand the annihilation of the Boers, and the political subjection of the Dutch. The fidelity of the Loyalists claims our proper gratitude. But has not England made for them sufficient sacrifice, and is it not carrying their claims too far to demand that the Empire shall suffer indefinitely this terrible drain of blood and treasure ? Is there to be literally no limit to our sacrifices ? Do the Loyalists insist that we shall see another 16,000 of our sons completing with their death the subjugation of their political rivals, another £150,000,000 lost for ever and to no purpose in the devouring maw of South Africa ? Surely we have suffered enough : is this disastrous war to proceed until these men have their political foes by the throat ? Is not the hour come when England should think of herself ?

Imagination shrinks before the future if we are bent on following our present path. Another weary year of war, costly with thousands of

English lives and millions of English money ; another year of alternate hope and fear, elation and despair ; another year of weakness in Europe and Asia, of impaired credit, and of growing taxation. And what of the end ? Failure it must be, for, whether we conquer or resign the struggle, we have failed. What can it be but failure if we have to keep down an embittered population by a standing army, to rule with the sword two desolated provinces whose exhausted revenues the British taxpayer must make good ?

If the sufferings of South Africa and our own grave national dangers have little weight with us, shall we pay no heed to the silent appeal of our soldiers ?<sup>1</sup> It can no longer be hidden from the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chamberlain is proud of this war, and regards all suffering caused by it as "irrelevant." A different view of statesmanship was expressed by Pericles when he boasted that up to that time no Athenian had put on mourning through any act of his. Here may be quoted Burke's indignant rebuke to the wanton maker of war :—

"A conscientious man would be cautious how he dealt in blood. He would feel some apprehension at being called to a tremendous account for engaging in so deep a play without any sort of knowledge of the game. It is no excuse for presumptuous ignorance that it is directed by insolent passion. The poorest being that crawls on earth, contending to save itself from injustice and oppression, is an object respectable in the eyes of God and man. But I cannot conceive any existence under heaven (which in the depth of its wisdom tolerates all sorts of things) that is more truly odious and disgusting than an impotent, helpless creature, without civil wisdom or military skill . . . bloated with pride and arrogance, calling for battles which he is not to fight. . . . If you and I find our talents not of the great and ruling kind, our conduct at least is conformable to our faculties. No man's life pays the forfeit of our rashness. No desolate widow weeps tears of blood over our ignorance." (*Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, 1777*).

dullest that our army is worn by constant labour and fasting, sick with disappointment, and wasted by disease. The high hopes with which our soldiers entered on their task have long since melted away, and in their place has come the deadly indifference which is born of inglorious and indecisive conflict. The strain is not for ever endurable by human beings, and though we know that our men will struggle on while there remains the shadow of a hope, should we ignore the danger that the fine drawn cord, of which we cannot see the slowly weakening strands, may snap at last? As we think of the brave men and gallant boys who have fallen to no purpose in this unhappy strife, the bitter and reproachful prayer of the Roman Emperor rings in our ears—*Vare, Vare, redde legiones.*"

Another consideration should urge us to bring this struggle to an end. We are in no ordinary case. If we were continuing the war to obtain from the Boers some gift or indemnity which they are not yet willing to grant, if it was our policy or our intention to leave the country in the hands of its inhabitants when the war was over, there might be some reason in our attitude. But we do not intend to leave this country; it has been annexed by us, and the two Republics now form part of our Empire. They are our colonies, the inhabitants are our subjects: we are then devastating our own property and slaying our own colonists. We have to live with these men for ever, we have to make them appreciate the blessings of English rule and work together with us for the prosperity of South Africa. Surely we are marching along a strange path to this end.

and the vigorous common sense that has kept England alive these many centuries. For violence will not help us: force is no remedy. Force may be a proper means to bring a savage race to reason, but it is not a weapon to be used lightly against a race so spirited and stubborn as the Boers. It is a weapon which it is easy to take up but hard to lay down, wounding its user as often as its victim. Its effects are fleeting, and when it is withdrawn, it leaves the object resentful and unconquered. It ruins the treasure which it seeks to possess, and if it fails, its failure is disgraceful and absolute.

Force without wisdom we have tested, and its folly is known to all. The apostles of violence robbed us of our American Colonies. Twenty years ago in Afghanistan our devastation and our violence were followed by a failure utter and undisguised. In 1857 the policy of the Provost Marshal delayed the advent of peace until a wise man inaugurated a clement policy, and a mutiny which might have lasted for years was calmed in a few months. In Canada sixty years ago a similar rivalry of race, a similar divergence of language and tradition, bid fair to distract that province for

with zeal to fill our place as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the church, *Sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made the most extensive, and the only honourable conquests; not by destroying, but by promoting, the wealth, the number, the happiness, of the human race."

*On Conciliation with America.*

ever. The same mad policy of force was tried in vain, and not until a wise statesman took up the reins of government did the tumult subside.

We are plunging blindly towards an unseen goal. We do not know when we shall reach it, nor how we shall reach it, nor if we shall reach it. Is this the majestic progress of a mighty empire? The capture by an army of a town or territory is not of necessity a conquest. There may be a victory more fatal to the victor than to the vanquished; there may be a success that turns to Dead Sea apples in our mouths. The glory of a great empire is not to win isolated triumphs, but to proportion her aims to her strength, to see with clear eyes the road along which she means to travel, and to make sure that every victory is a step in the orderly gradation of her progress. That is wise and conscious effort directed to ends which may be good or may be bad, but which at all events will be attained.

What can ultimate victory leave us but two ruined lands and sullen peoples? We may pour army after army into South Africa; we may make a desert and call it peace; but the peace will not be there. The clumsy and violent methods which we are using now will poison and inflame the whole body. Men have said that the epitaph of South Africa should be *Too late*; but would not a more just inscription be *Too soon*? It is ignorance and impatience which have inflicted on this unhappy country those cruel wounds which only tact and time will cure,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Moderation and patience—everlasting patience. In fact, patience seemed to him to solve almost every question in South Africa."—Sir J. GORDON SPRIGG in the Cape Parliament April 30th, 1897.

and many generations will pass before the bitter memories of these two years are blotted out from the minds of the Dutch. English men and English women have suffered great and abiding sorrow, but they have not seen their citizen soldiers sent captive to a distant land, their country laid desolate, their women and children carried into captivity, their independence taken from them.<sup>1</sup> These things will never be utterly forgotten, but it may be that their fierce outlines will be softened by the lapse of years and the wisdom of men. South Africa needs no "surgical operation," she asks only patience and sympathy and the healing hands of time.

As we went to war to vindicate a misty claim of suzerainty, so we seem likely to remain at war because we have not the clear sight and the moral courage which can see a means of escape from a lamentable complication. It has been the am-

<sup>1</sup> The words of Paine are as true to-day of the Dutch as they were true one hundred and twenty years ago of the Americans—"We are a people who think not as you think ; and what is equally true, you cannot feel as we feel. The situations of the two countries are exceedingly different. Ours has been the seat of war ; yours has seen nothing of it. The most wanton destruction has been committed in our sight ; the most insolent barbarity has been acted on our feelings. We can look round and see the remains of burnt and destroyed houses, once the fair fruit of hard industry. We walk over the dead whom we loved, in every part of America, and remember by whom they fell. There is scarcely a village but brings to life some melancholy thought, and reminds us of what we have suffered, and of those we have lost by the inhumanity of Britain. A thousand images arise to us, which, from situation, you cannot see, and we are accompanied by as many ideas which you cannot know." *Thomas Paine to Lord Shelburne.*

bition of every statesman to form South Africa into a federation under the English flag, and it is the declared ambition of our own Ministers to endow our new possessions with the largest privileges of self-government. If therefore it is now in our power to end at once this most unhappy and inglorious war with a settlement which would give us all that the most sanguine ever dared to hope, what is it but temper and the spirit of revenge which delay the advent of peace? There is in every heart, expressed or unexpressed, a deep longing for peace. England requires it, the enemy would welcome it: are we so set on unconditional submission that peace shall only come to us by that fatal path?

For what are we fighting now? Is it to vindicate British supremacy in South Africa? But was that supremacy ever in real danger? No sane Boer questioned our power or our rights, and on any assumption they are surely vindicated now. Is it to gain the franchise for our citizens, and to undo the grievances of the mine-owners? We can gain the one and undo the other by an honourable peace. It must be, then, that, as embittered partisans have told us, we are fighting to force the Boers to their knees, to compel an unconditional surrender, to thrash the remaining life out of this little people who have defied us so long. Is this a worthy aim for the conquerors of Napoleon? Nor shall we reach our end. We are essaying now an impossible task. We may slay the bodies of our foe, but they have something which is beyond our reach. You cannot dam the mountain stream or force back freedom to her source. Illimitable as the rolling veldt,

indestructible as the high hills that nurture it, the national spirit of this people will elude our fetters. Unvanquished in heart they will await the inevitable hour of their release. Their allies will be bitter agony and memory and time and hope, *and man's unconquerable mind.*

The war indeed has long lost its glamour. To a large section of the English people it has always been odious and in the eyes of every foreign nation we suffer daily humiliation. The support of our Colonies, the patience of our citizens, the valour of our army, the individual heroism of our soldiers, cannot cleanse it from the trail of finance which has been over it from the beginning. Can we draw comfort or renown from such a war? What glory shall a mighty empire win from a victory over 15,000 farmers? We are forcing upon our army the cruel humiliation of beating our enemy by the sheer force of 15 against 1: we who used to boast that one Briton was a match for any three of his foes. Deep down in our hearts is there not a shrinking shame when our Ministers confess that they have half starved the wives and children of our enemy because they will not yield; that they have burnt their farms because they cannot conquer them? Is our brave army to be made the tool of civil meanness? Is there here the dignity and the chivalry of war? is there not rather unutterable disgrace?

Is it too late to appeal to the nobler instincts of those who minister for the Prince of Peace? In the beginning they were deceived as most men were deceived; but surely now the scales have fallen from their eyes. Can they any longer applaud a war which is fast becoming a national disgrace?



Will they follow the steps of their predecessors in 1777 and bring on themselves the same indignant words which Chatham poured upon the time-serving prelates who could defend the outrageous excesses of North's Ministry ; or will they not rather forsake what seems to them the exercise of an exalted patriotism and protest against a mode of warfare which our Ministers attempt to screen but dare not justify.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In order that these words may not be held the vain mouthings of an ignorant civilian, let me quote from a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* of August 4, 1901, by Field-Marshal Sir Neville Chamberlain, whose distinguished services and position will ensure him a respectful hearing : " I feel bound to differ from the conclusion drawn by Sir Edward Grey that the war in South Africa has been conducted throughout in accordance with the accepted rules of civilised warfare. I dissent, because the necessity has never been made clear to the nation to justify a departure from the recognised laws of international warfare. I mean the frequent injudicious if not reckless burning or sacking of the farmsteads or homes of the Boers, the removal or destruction of the food stored in their houses for the maintenance of their families, the sweeping away of all cattle and sheep, the destruction of mills and implements of agriculture, as also the forcible removal into camps of all women and children, and there being kept in bondage. . .

" In a word, the justification set forth by the authorities is that the end justifies the means. If that dogma be a just one, and it is to hold good in all the wars that are to take place in the future, then indeed the doctrines and practices enjoined by the Christian religion must be held to possess no jurisdiction over the sphere of politics or war."

Of the Boers he writes :—" It would seem to have passed out of mind that the Boers in arms have never ceased to possess the rights of belligerents. They are still brave patriots fighting for independence."

He concludes :—" Finally, sir, let me add that when this war is ended the nation will, I believe, be made to realise the truth of the saying of Sir Philip Sidney : ' Cruelty in war buyeth conquest at the dearest price.' "

# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A

### A CONVENTION CONCLUDED BETWEEN HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, &c., &c., AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC.

*NOTE.—The words and paragraphs bracketed or printed in italics are proposed to be inserted, those within a black line are proposed to be omitted*

Her Majesty's Commissioners for the settlement of the Transvaal Territory, duly appointed as such by a Commission passed under the Royal Sign Manual and Signet, bearing date the 5th of April 1881, do hereby undertake and guarantee, on behalf of Her Majesty, that from and after the 8th day of August 1881, complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, Her Heir and Successors, will be accorded to the inhabitants of the Transvaal Territory, upon the following terms and conditions, and subject to the following reservations and limitations :—

Whereas the Government of the Transvaal State, through its Delegates, consisting of Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, President of the said State ; Stephanus Johannes Du Toit, Superintendent of Education ; Nicholas Jacobus Smit, a member of the

Volkraad, have represented to the Queen that the Convention signed at Pretoria on the 3rd day of August, 1881, and ratified by the Volksraad of the said State on the 25th October, 1881, contains certain provisions which are inconvenient, and imposes burdens and obligations from which the said State is desirous to be relieved; and that the south-western boundaries fixed by the said Convention should be amended, with a view to promote the peace and good order of the said state, and of the countries adjacent thereto; and whereas Her Majesty the Queen, &c., &c., has been pleased to take the said representations into consideration. Now, therefore, Her Majesty has been pleased to direct, and it is hereby declared that the following articles of a new Convention . . . . . shall when ratified by the Volksraad of the South African Republic, be substituted for the Articles embodied in the Convention of 3rd August, 1881; which latter, pending such ratification, shall continue in full force and effect.

Signed at Pretoria, London, this 3rd day of August 1881.

HERCULES ROBINSON,  
President and High Commissioner  
EVELYN WOOD, Major-General,  
Officer Administering the Government.  
J. H. de VILLIERS.

We, the undersigned, Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus-Jacobus Joubert, as representatives delegates of the Transvaal Boers, South African Republic, do hereby agree to all the above conditions, reservations, and limitations, under which self-government has been restored to the inhabitants of the Transvaal Territory, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, and we agree to accept the Government of the said Territory, with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining, on the 8th day of August 1881, and we promise and undertake that this Convention shall be ratified by a newly elected Volksraad of the Transvaal State South African Republic within three six months from this date.

Signed at Pretoria, London, this 3rd day of August 1881.

S. J. P. KRUGER.  
M. W. PRETORIUS.  
P. J. JOUBERT.

## APPENDIX B

## REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF JOHANNESBURG

"JOHANNESBURG,

*"January 9th.*

"This is to certify that I have carefully examined: (a) a sample of mealie meal numbered 1; (b) a sample of mealie meal numbered 2; and (c) a sample of sugar numbered 3. Sample 1 is mouldy, contains mite, and is unfit for human consumption. Sample 2 contains mite, but I could not discover in it living mite. It is, however, dangerous as human food. Sample 3 is a moist sample of brown sugar. The smell is somewhat sour, but microscopically I could not find ferment or other foreign matter except water. The sugar is unfit for the use of young children. If the meal and the sugar from which the samples are taken are used as human food, they are liable to produce diarrhoea, especially to children. I have sealed the samples with my seal after examining them.

"D. W. JOHNSTON, F.R.C.S., D.P.H., &c."

## APPENDIX C

## EXTRACTS FROM MISS HOBHOUSE'S REPORT

## THE BLOEMFONTEIN CAMP.

*January 26th.*

The exile camp here is a good two miles from the town, dumped down on the southern slope of a kopje, right out on to the bare brown veldt, not a vestige of a tree in any direction, nor shade of any description. It was about four o'clock of a scorching afternoon when I set foot in the camp, and I can't tell you what I felt like, so I won't try.

I began by finding a woman whose sister I had met in Capetown. It is such a puzzle to find your way in a village of bell tents, no streets or names or numbers. There are nearly 2,000<sup>1</sup> people in this one camp, of which some few are men—they call them "hands up" men—and over 900<sup>1</sup> children.

## THE STATE OF THE TENTS.

Imagine the heat outside the tents, and the suffocation inside! We sat on their khaki blankets, rolled up, inside

<sup>1</sup> These numbers are now nearly doubled

Mrs. B.'s tent ; and the sun blazed through the single canvas, and the flies lay thick and black on everything ; no chair, no table, nor any room for such ; only a deal box, standing on its end, served as a wee pantry. In this tiny tent live Mrs. B's five children (three quite grown up) and a little Kaffir servant girl. Many tents have more occupants. Mrs. P. came in, and Mrs. R. and others, and they told me their stories, and we cried together, and even laughed together, and chatted bad Dutch and bad English all the afternoon. On wet nights the water streams down through the canvas and comes flowing in, as it knows how to do in this country, under the flap of the tent, and wets their blanket as they lie on the ground. While we sat there a snake came in. They said it was a puff adder, very poisonous, so they all ran out, and I attacked the creature with my parasol. I could not bear to think the thing should be at large in a community mostly sleeping on the ground. After a struggle I wounded it, and then a man came with a mallet and finished it off.

#### THE WONDERFUL WOMEN.

Mrs. P. is very brave and calm. She has six children, ranging from fifteen down to two years, and she does not know where any of them is.<sup>1</sup> She was taken right away from them ; her husband is in detention of some kind at Bloemfontein, but not allowed to see her. She expects her confinement in about three weeks, and yet has to lie on the bare ground till she is stiff and sore, and she has had nothing to sit on for over two months, but must squat on a rolled-up blanket. I felt quite sure you would like her to have a mattress, and I asked her if she would accept one. She did so very gratefully, and I did not rest yesterday till I got one out to her. All her baby-linen was in readiness at home, but all is lost. This is but one case, quite ordinary among hundreds and hundreds. The women are wonderful. They cry very little and never complain. The very magnitude of their sufferings, indignities, loss, and anxiety seems to lift them beyond tears. These people, who have had comfortable, even luxurious, homes, just set themselves to quiet endurance and to make the best of their bare and

<sup>1</sup> Three months later : Mrs. P. has been rejoined to all her children, except two.

terrible lot ; only when it cuts afresh at them through their children do their feelings flash out. Mrs. M., for instance. She has six children in camp, all ill, two in the tin hospital with typhoid, and four sick in the tent. She also expects her confinement soon. Her husband is in Ceylon. She has means, and would gladly provide for herself either in town or in the Colony, where she has relations, or by going back to her farm. It was not burnt, only the furniture was destroyed ; yet here she has to stay, watching her children droop and sicken. For their sakes she did plead with tears that she might go and fend for herself.

#### THE CRUELTY OF THE CAMPS.

I call this camp system a wholesale cruelty. It can never be wiped out of the memories of the people. It presses hardest on the children. They droop in the terrible heat, and with the insufficient, unsuitable food ; whatever you do, whatever the authorities do—and they are, I believe, doing their best with very limited means—it all is only a miserable patch up on a great ill. Thousands, physically unfit, are placed in conditions of life which they have not strength to endure. In front of them is blank ruin. There are cases, too, in which whole families are severed and scattered, they don't know where.

Will you try, somehow, to make the British public understand the position, and force it to ask itself what is going to be done with these people ? There must be full 15,000<sup>1</sup> of them ; I should not wonder if there are not more. Some few have means, but more are ruined, and have not a present penny. In one of two ways must the British public support them, either by taxation through the authorities or else by voluntary charity.

#### WHY NOT LET THEM GO ?

If the people at home want to save their purses (you see, I appeal to low motives), why not allow those who can maintain themselves to go to friends and relatives in the Colony ? Many wish ardently to do so. That would be some relief. If only the English people would try to

<sup>1</sup> Of course the numbers are now largely increased, over 20,000 in Orange River Colony alone ; 25,000 in Transvaal camps, besides the Colony and Natal. [This was written in January, 1901. These numbers are now still further increased, August, 1901.]

exercise a little imagination—picture the whole miserable scene : entire villages and districts rooted up and dumped in a strange, bare place.

To keep these camps going is murder to the children. Still, of course, by more judicious management, they could be improved ; but, do what you will, you can't undo the thing itself.

#### THE RATIONS.

Now I must tell you their rations :—

Daily—

Meat,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. (with bone and fat).

Coffee, 2oz.

Wholemeal,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

Condensed milk, one-twelfth of tin.

Sugar, 2oz.

Salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

That is all, nothing else to fill in. Once they sometimes had potatoes, seven potatoes for seven people, but that has long been impossible. Soap also has been unattainable, and none given in the rations.<sup>1</sup> Some people have money, and may add to the above by purchasing certain things at some little retail shops allowed in the camp, which charge exorbitant prices<sup>2</sup>—for instance, 6d. for a reel of cotton. But they are, naturally, terribly afraid of parting with their money, feeling it is all they will have to begin life on again, for every one's income is stopped, nothing is coming in. It is, indeed, a dreary prospect. Some few of those who had cash in hand buried it out on their farms for safety, and now, of course, cannot reach it. All say, if released, they would make a living somehow, and shelter beneath the ruined home would be as good as these often rotten tents. It is hard enough that, but countless children's lives would be saved thereby.

#### THE TYPHOID WATER.

We have much typhoid, and are dreading an outbreak, so I am directing my energies to getting the water of the

<sup>1</sup> With much persuasion, and weeks after requisitioning, soap is now given occasionally in very minute quantities—certainly not enough for clothes and personal washing.

<sup>2</sup> In some camps steps are now taken to prevent exorbitant charges in these shops in certain articles.

Modder River boiled. As well swallow typhoid germs whole as drink that water—so say doctors. Yet they cannot boil it all, for, first, fuel is very scarce. That which is supplied weekly would not cook a meal a day, and they have to search the already bare kopjes for a supply. There is hardly a bit to be had ; secondly, they have no extra utensil to hold the water when boiled. I propose, therefore, to give each tent another pail or crock, and get a proclamation issued that all drinking water must be boiled. It will cost nearly £50 to do this, even if utensils are procurable.

In spite of small water supply, and it is very spare, all the tents I have been in are exquisitely neat and clean, except two, and they were ordinary, and such limitations !

#### DYING CHILDREN.

Some people in town still assert that the camp is a haven of bliss. Well, there are eyes and no eyes. I was at the camp to-day, and just in one little corner this is the sort of thing I found. The nurse, underfed and overworked, just sinking on to her bed, hardly able to hold herself up, after coping with some thirty typhoid and other patients, with only the untrained help of two Boer girls—cooking as well as nursing to do herself.

Next, I was called to see a woman panting in the heat, just sickening for her confinement. Fortunately, I had a night-dress in my bundle to give her, and two tiny baby gowns.

Next tent, a six months' baby gasping its life out on its mother's knee. The doctor had given it powders in the morning, but it had taken nothing since. Two or three others drooping and sick in that tent.

Next, child recovering from measles, sent back from hospital before it could walk, stretched on the ground, white and wan ; three or four others lying about.

Next, a girl of twenty-one lay dying on a stretcher. The father—a big, gentle Boer—kneeling beside her ; while, next tent, his wife was watching a child of six, also dying, and one of about five drooping. Already this couple had lost three children in the hospital, and so would not let these go, though I begged hard to take them out of the hot



tent. "We must watch these ourselves," he said. I sent — to find brandy, and got some down the girl's throat, but for the most part you must stand and look on, helpless to do anything, because there is nothing to do anything with.

Then a man came up and said: "Sister" (they call me "Sister," or "Di Meisie van England"), "come and see my child, sick for nearly three months." It was a dear little chap of four, and nothing left of him but his great brown eyes and white teeth, from which the lips were drawn back, too thin to close. His body was emaciated. The little fellow had craved for fresh milk; but, of course, there had been none till these last two days, and now the fifty cows only give four buckets, so you can imagine what feed there is for them. I sent — for some of this, and made him lay the child outside on a pillow to get the breeze that comes up at sunset. I can't describe what it is to see these children lying about in a state of collapse. It's just exactly like faded flowers thrown away. And one has to stand and look on at such misery and be able to do almost nothing.

#### THE DIFFERENCE IN THE CAMPS.

*March 10th.*

I wish you could impress on the English public that one can't speak generally about these camps, or the conditions of the women therein. One is very different from another. I mention this because there is likely to be any amount of assertion and contradiction on this subject. All are different, and the amount of discomfort depends upon various matters. First: The Commandant. Secondly: Natural conditions, proximity of wood and water. Thirdly: Distance from a base and stores. Fourthly: Presence of public opinion. Fifthly: Date of commencement.

The earlier camps, of course, had opportunities of getting many necessities which are no longer attainable.

#### MORE "SWEEPING."

*Blomfontein.*

If only the camps had remained the size they were even six weeks ago, I saw some chance of getting them well in hand, organising and dealing with the distress. But

this sudden influx of hundreds and thousands has upset everything, and reduced us all to a state bordering on despair.

More and more are coming on. A new sweeping movement has begun, resulting in hundreds and thousands of these unfortunate people either crowding into already crowded camps or else being dumped down to form a new one where nothing is at hand to shelter them.

About food, too. The superintendent of a camp is getting in rations for such a number, and suddenly 200 more mouths are thrust in upon him, and things won't go round. Last Saturday 200 or 300 families were without meat in Bloemfontein Camp for that day and Sunday. This would not matter if there were an alternative food, but there is only the ordinary supply of coarse bread to fall back upon, with black coffee and sugar.

No wonder sickness abounds. Since I left here six weeks ago there have been 62 deaths in camp, and the doctor himself is down with enteric. Two of the Boer girls who had been trained as nurses, and who were doing good work, are dead, too.

A letter from the Governor of Pretoria tells me of 25,000 in Transvaal camps.

The Committee should notice the existence also of large camps of natives, and in some at least of these sickness and death abound.

During the past three months effort has undoubtedly been made to improve the camps, but difficulties of transport, scarcity of supplies and tents, limited means for outlay, tie the hands of those in authority. Added to this the incompetence of some superintendents, and an over-centralised system which impedes good work that could and would be done by capable and resourceful local heads of camps. Another bar to advance is the interlacing of civil and military authority, and the unfitness of most military men (however good their intentions) for positions which involve the ordering of the lives of women and children.

Thus the improvements have in many cases been swamped, partly by these things, and partly by the rapid influx of people. For instance, a great blunder was made by bringing an extra 2,000 people into Bloemfontein Camp, already known to be unhealthy and full of fever.

"The death-rate in most of the camps is high. In Bloemfontein it is terrible; 172 deaths had occurred up to the date of my leaving. On Sunday, April 28th, fifteen persons died in that camp. It figures out to about 25 per cent." The camp life, she says, is demoralising to the young, and there is a lack of proper recreation. She ends: To sum up. There is no doubt that the general discomfort could be vastly alleviated by attention to the points mentioned, but it should be clearly understood that they are suggested only by way of amelioration. The main thing is to let them go. The ruin of most is now complete, but let all who have friends or means left go. Above all one would hope that the good sense, if not the mercy, of the English people will cry out against the further development of this cruel system, which falls with such crushing effect upon the old, the weak, and the children. May they stay the order to bring in more and yet more. Since Old Testament days was ever a whole nation carried captive?

Finally, Miss Hobhouse appends an appeal, which is signed by forty women, and ought to touch the hearts of many English women living comfortably in unburnt homes:

#### MAJOR WRIGHT (Commandant)

We, the undersigned, respectfully wish to address you with the following request:

I. As we are separated from our husbands, and thus left without help, it is impossible, in the circumstances in which we are placed, to live.

II. On account of carelessness, bad management, and ill-treatment, it is now the second time that we are drenched through and through by rain, which caused our children, already sick with measles, whooping-cough, and fever, to become dangerously ill.

III. Being without money, it is impossible for us to provide or obtain soap, candles, or other necessities. It is now almost three weeks that most of us have been unable to do any washing. It is more than we can stand to be satisfied under all this. These are our griefs. This our humble request is—to look into our case with all reasonableness, and to have compassion on our position, and to give

us our liberty by allowing us to return to our respective homes.

We hope and trust that you will take our humble request in favourable consideration, and meet us in this our request as soon as possible.

PS.—Major Commandant, and others in authority,—  
With God there is mercy. Is there, then, no mercy with you for us poor innocent women and children? Our request is to allow us to leave the 10th March, 1901.

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## APPENDIX D

*From "The Westminster Gazette" of June 28, 1901*

### THE WOMEN'S CAMPS AT PRETORIA

#### ANOTHER ENGLISH LADY'S REPORT

ON Monday last an English lady, who has resided in Pretoria during the war, arrived in London. She left the capital of the Transvaal on May 23rd, and is full of information on the subject of the treatment of the women and children in the camp at Irene, which is situated on a rising slope in the neighbourhood of Pretoria. It will be remembered that Miss Hobhouse was forbidden by the military authorities to visit any of the prison camps in the Transvaal. The following statement as to the condition of the women and children will be read, therefore, with interest. It will be seen that it confirms some of the more painful features in Miss Hobhouse's report:—

"When I left Pretoria, on May 23rd, there were 5,000 men and children in the camp at Irene, and 1,000 were reported to be sick. The camp itself is on the site of a camp previously occupied by the British soldiers when they were prisoners in Pretoria. The ground is high and sloping. The camp is surrounded by a fence of barbed wire, and guarded by sentries, who refuse to permit any entrance or egress excepting under military pass. There is no truth in the statement, which to my surprise I find repeated in London, that the women and children went

to the camps by their own consent, or are willing to remain there. In almost every case these women, with their little ones, have been taken by force from their homes at a moment's notice. They have not even been allowed to take with them a morsel of food or to be removed in their own carts. They were taken by the soldiers, and put into open cattle-trucks and waggons, while their own beautiful waggons, carts, and vehicles were burnt before their eyes.

"The work of the destruction of the goods of these unfortunate people was not by any means confined to foodstuffs or to houses that might shelter the enemy. Thousands of bales of valuable wool, in the Standerton and Ermelo districts, were destroyed by first saturating them with paraffin oil, and then setting them on fire. Bales of wool cannot be used for food.

"The impression seems to prevail in this country that the work of farm-burning has ceased. Nothing could be further from the truth. When a sweeping operation takes place, and a column goes out for the purpose of denuding the country of supplies, the farmhouses are uniformly first gutted and usually set on fire. When Mrs. Botha received permission from Lord Kitchener to visit her husband, she crossed the country in a Cape cart, and stayed each night at a farmhouse *en route*. After staying five days with her husband, she set out to return to Pretoria. She could not come back the way she went, because all the houses which had given her shelter had been burnt to the ground in that brief interval. The work of destruction is usually done in a desperate hurry, for the soldiers are afraid that they may be surprised by the Boers in the midst of their work. They therefore usually set a house on fire or blow up the walls with dynamite if it is strongly built. The crops are destroyed, hundreds of bags of grain are ripped open and trampled under foot, fruit trees are cut down, and all this has to be done in a few hours. In most of these houses which have been destroyed are stored excellent tents used by the young people of the Boers when they go out into the veldt to pasture their cattle. If they had been permitted to remove them, they would at least have had shelter over their heads, but no woman was allowed to bring with her a tent to protect her from the sun by day or the cold by night. The tents were burnt

with all the other furniture of the household ; and thus beggared and homeless they were carted off across the veldt, and consigned to the camps, in which they remain prisoners to this day.

"When I left Pretoria it was already very cold, even inside my own home. What it must have been outside in the tents on the bleak hillside I shudder to think. Yet that was only the beginning of winter. The number of deaths occurring among the children is appalling. Unless the death-rate is checked, there will be no children left in the camp when the winter is over. The women and children sleep on straw mattresses, on the bare ground. The tents are without lining, and they afford hardly any protection against wind, nor have the women adequate clothing. Some were allowed to snatch a blanket from the bonfire which was made of all their goods and possessions, but if they had only been allowed to bring their bedding they would at least have been saved some of the intense misery to which they are at present doomed. As a rule they were allowed to bring nothing with them but the clothes which were on their backs. There is also hardly any fuel in the camps, it being exceedingly scarce.

"While the shelter is miserably inadequate, the rations are very bad. The military authorities have entered into an arrangement with a contractor by which he supplies the camp with food for adults. No special food is supplied for children. The rations supplied by the contractor, which are by no means the regular army rations, consist of flour that is often bitter and unfit to be eaten. Even if it were good, the women are not accustomed to white flour, and do not like it. They have always used either whole ground meal or Boer meal, but white flour many of them touched for the first time when their day's rations was handed to them. The coffee is hardly deserving of the name, and appears to be made largely of roasted acorns. The sugar is the result of the skimmings of the sugar boiler. The food is quite inadequate for adults, and the poor children simply starve and die. The mortality among children is really terrible. From one farm alone ten children have died, and there are cases in which every child in the family have perished. How can it be otherwise? Children under seven years of age require to have some kind of milk diet. Of course I am well aware that milk fresh from the cow is

impossible. Every milch cow is commandeered for the use of the sick in the military hospital, but that is no reason why children should not be supplied with condensed milk and Mellins' food. The statement that it is impossible to supply condensed milk to the prison camps may be made here, but I never heard of any such excuse in Pretoria. I know of my own certain knowledge that there is any amount of condensed milk in Pretoria. I brought my own baby up on it for the last two years, and never had any difficulty in procuring as much as was wanted, with the exception of the first four months after the occupation of Pretoria. Not only is there any amount of condensed milk in Pretoria, but a Hollander Charitable Committee, which was formed for the purpose of relieving the distressed women and children, actually kept many children in the camp alive by distributing condensed milk and other foods to the little ones; but for some reason or other—I think it was about the month of April—the military authorities withdrew the licence by virtue of which the Hollander Committee had been able to distribute these necessities of life to the children, with the result that the children are dying like flies. Why they should be deprived of condensed milk and other food necessary to keep them alive I do not know. But you can hardly be surprised if it is misinterpreted by the Dutch. They are aware that the authorities did, as a matter of policy, order that the women and families of the men still fighting should only receive half rations and no meat whatever. Since I came to this country I hear that the rescinding of this inhuman order was attributed to pressure brought to bear on Ministers in the House of Commons. We knew nothing about that in Pretoria. All that we knew was that the foreign Consuls protested against the refusal of full rations to the women and children whose husbands were still on commando, and the distinction was blocked in deference—so we always understood—to the representations of the Consuls. A few nurses are allowed in the camp, but the doctors do not understand the language of many of their patients, and obstacles have been placed in the way of the granting of a licence to the Hollander Society, which undertook to supply medical relief to the sufferers. It is merely human nature that the Dutch should take a rather sinister view of these proceedings."

## APPENDIX E

## "CLEARING THE COUNTRY"

THE *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser and Leamington Gazette*, in a description of the home-coming of the county volunteers, says :—

Many startling facts were admitted by some of the Yeomanry regarding the farm-burning in South Africa. The Warwickshire Company for some months past had been attached to Paget's column, and since Christmas, save for periodical encounters with isolated bodies of marauding Boers, had been occupied with the burning of farms.

"What farms did you burn?" this Yeoman was asked. Not understanding the question, it had to be explained to him that the English at home had been told that only those farms on which concealed Boers or arms were found had been subjected to this unpleasant treatment. He was surprised at these statements, and, as his reply shows, failed to acknowledge their accuracy. "I don't know," he says, "about finding Boers or arms. All I know is this, that some days we would start off early in the morning, and try during the whole day to burn as many farms as we could. I never saw one in some districts that was spared. We used to ride up—half a dozen of us—to the door, dismount, and rap loudly with our rifles on the wood. We didn't wait for an invitation. In we went with a rush and said to the woman, 'Come on, pack up, missus; there's a cart waiting for you.' And we gave her ten minutes to get a few things together, and then, with the youngsters, she was packed into the open waggon and driven off to the nearest camp."

"Did you ever find Boers or ammunition hidden away?" —"Never, during the whole time, except a few loose bullets lying about in different rooms."

"Then why did you burn the farms?"—"By the General's orders. We used to have plenty of fun. All the rooms were ransacked. You can't imagine what beautiful things there were there—copper kettles, handsome chairs and couches, lovely chests of drawers, and all sorts of books. I've smashed dozens of pianos. Half a dozen of us would go up to as fine a grand piano as ever I've seen.



Some would commence playing on the keys with the butts of their rifles. Others would smash off the legs and panels, and finally completely wreck it. Pictures would be turned into targets, and the piano panels would be taken outside and used as fuel to boil our tea or coffee. And then we would enjoy ourselves if it was cold, but," he added ruefully, "it was generally hot—boiling hot. After this we would set the building on fire, and as we left, riding together or detached over the sandy waste, we could see the flames rising up, and soon there would be nothing left but black, smouldering embers. We would do the same with the next farm we came across."

The speaker then went on to describe how news of their approach had often been carried to the inhabitants of a farm, and before the punitive party arrived the house had been deserted and all the cattle and valuables carried off. On these occasions they undertook the task of making a bonfire of the building with even greater relish than on ordinary occasions.

#### THE UNFORTUNATE MOTHERS.

"How did the families take this farm-burning?"—"Well," he replied, the smile on his face abruptly dying away, "to tell you the truth, we had to shut our eyes to a great many sights. The mothers would implore us with the little English they could muster to leave them in peace, and then, as we could not listen to them, they would dry their tears and curse and swear at us. We were the 'verdommte rooineks' (rednecks), and often they would say, 'You kill my father or brother at the war,' and straightway fall to heaping all sorts of bad names upon us. It was not always pleasant. I have often seen a mother in this situation, with a two months old baby at the breast and little ones around her, with a number of Kaffir women howling in sympathy. But we had to do our duty."

Another of the returned Yeomen, alluding to the same subject, farm-burning, said many curious finds were made in the Boer houses. Copies of the *Sphere* and the other weekly London illustrated papers had often been picked up, all carefully preserved, and plentifully dog-eared Dutch books of instruction were common. "But," he added, "it would be useless detailing the contents of the houses. All you have to do is to imagine yourself with a number of chums

walking casually into a respectable gentleman's house in Warwick and pocketing what you thought you wanted. It's just the same out there. I've got a Boer watch (pulling a huge timekeeper out of a leathern pouch which hung under his coat) which I wouldn't sell for five pounds. Keep time well? I should think so," and he compared its hands with the time at Budbrooke Barracks, to find that there was hardly a second's difference between them."

